

T H E
HISTORY
OF THE
Seven Wise MASTERS
O F
ROME.

Newly corrected, and better explained in many places.



G L A S G O W,
By Robert Sanders, one of their
Majesties Printers. 1693.

x

124506-45

T H E
HISTORY
OF THE
Seven Wise MASTERS
O F
ROME.

Newly corrected, and better explained in many places.



G. L. A. S. G. O. W,
By *Robert Sanders*, one of their
Majesties Printers, 1693.

x

124506-45

T H E
HISTORY
OF THE
Seven Wise MASTERS
O F
ROME.

Newly corrected, and better explained in many places.



G L A S G O W,
By *Robert Sanders*, one of their
Majesties Printers, 1693.

TO THE READER.

R Eader, for thy better delight, and more plainly to set forth this History to thy view, I have corrected many things which did marr the true meaning thereof. The History of it self is both ancient & moral, and containeth in it much of that learning: when Ignorance having a thick and dull ear, men were compelled to draw the rude multitude to attention of good instruction, by such pleasing allurements of Tales and Fables, as in this Book is set down: that as the mind is fed and delighted with the sweetness of fabulous story, the Soul it self at the end (by often tasting the same nourishment) grows quicker-fighted to behold the hidden and mystical Wisdom contained under such close Riddles. For in few Words, to give you the meaning of this Moral, it is thus: The Emperor may signify the *World*, who having but one only Son, who is *Man*: him to bring up well, is all his care. But *Man* losing his own Mother, who is *Reason*, or divine *Grace*, and falling into the hands of his Step-mother, signifying *Sin*, who is an Empress of great bewitching, and one that commands the *World*, she worketh by all means possible the utter confusion of *Man*.

And would prevail against his weakness, but that a Star from Heaven (by which is meant Goodness from above) instructs man how to avoid the allurements of sin, by not opening his mouth, to bid her welcome. And the better to prevent her mischief, he hath *Seven Wise Masters*, which are seven liberal Sciences, to give him wholesome instructions: and by those helps, save him from mortal danger. So that being thus armed, man liveth to batter down sin (figured in the death of the Empress and her minions.) And in the end, to gain a rich Crown of Glory and Happinesse, so ready for all those that in this life labor to attain to Heaven by doing well.

This is the Explanation of this Moral: of which if thou makest right use, it will be as a rich Banquet to thy Soul. Fare-well.



H. E. E.

4d1

HERE BEGINNETH THE HISTORY
of the seven Wise Masters of Rome.

Containing many pleasant and witty Narrations, very
delightful to the Reader.

*The entrance into the Moral, which (according to things of
Comick pleasure) properly begins with a Funeral,*

Sometimes in the City of Rome, there was a famous Emperor, named Domitianus, a man of great wisdom. He took to his wife a Kings Daughter, that was very faire, amiable to all people, gracious, and to her husband sight dear: she conceived by him, and was delivered of a son, named Dioclesian. The child grew apace, and of all people was beloved: And when he was of the age of seven years, his mother the Emperess falling sick, and feeling her self that she might not live, sent after her Lord the Emperour (being rode forth on progress) a messenger, that he should return without tarrying, if ever he should see her alive.

And when he was come, she said unto him. Oh my dear Lord, of this infirmity I may not escape, wherefore the natural and tender love and care that is in me towards you and your son, makes a sute to you before my death. He answered, Desire what you will, for I shal not deny you any thing. Then said she. After my death you shal take another wife, as is most convenient; wherefore I instantly beseech you, that she over my Son have no power nor governance, but that he be kept and nourished far from her, and that he may be trained up in learning and wisdom. The Emperour then answered; My most dear wife, your petition in all things shal be fulfilled and performed. Then turned the Emperess and gave up the Ghost. Many days after, the Emperour bewailed and mourned her death: and long after her burying, he shewed his heaviness and sorrow, and would in no wise be merry, or joyfull.

How the Emperour committed and delivered his Son to
the seven Wise Masters, to be instructed in learning.

UPon a time as the Emperour lay in his bed, he bethought him inwardly of his Son, saying in his heart, I have only but one Son, the which shal be mine heir, it is good whilst he is young, that he be set to learn cunning and wisdom, by the which he may after my death govern and rule the Empire. Instructing thereby that a worthy Prince taking upon him so great a weight and charge, as the government of a Kingdom, ought first to learn to be his own Governor, and to master his own affections. So that when he was early risen up from his bed, he caused to be called the Lords of his Council before him, and of them took advice what were best therein to be done. And they answered, Lord, in Rome are seven wise Masters, who live in great fame for their

excellencie in Arts, grave counsell, and instruction: let them be sent for, and deliver them your Son to be fostered and instructed in learning. The Emperour understanding that, sent his letters made powerful by his own seal, to the seven wise Masters, that they incontinently should come to him without delay. And they anon came before the Emperour, and he demanded of them, whether they knew wherfore that he had sent for them: They answered, The cause is as your wilt intendeth: we know not; but if it please you to shew us your mind and intent, we be ready to fulfill it to the utmost of our power. To whom the noble Emperour said, I have but one Son, the which I shal deliver unto you, to inform in all good ways of learning and vertue, so that by your doctrine and wisdom, he may more wisely guide and govern the Empire after my deceale.

The first Master, named Pantillas, said: Lord, deliver to me your Son, and I shal teach him as much cunning within seven years, as I and all my fellows can.

Then spake the second Master, named Lentulus: Sir, of long time I have served you, and hitherto I have had no manner of reward, I demand nothing else of you, but that you deliver me your Son to keep and govern, and I shal make him as cunning within six years, as I and all my fellows be.

The third Master, named Craton, said: My Lord, many times have I been with you upon the sea in perill of my life, and of you have I had no manner of reward: if that I might for my recompence, now, obtain that you will vouchsafe to commit your Son under my rule and governance, I should inform him as much within five years, if his wit will thereto attain, as I and my fellows can.

Then stood up the fourth Master, name Palquidack, who was right lean of body, and said: My Lord, call to your remembrance how that I and all my predecessors have served Emperours, and have received no manner of reward: wherefore I shal ask no other thing, but that you will deliver me your Son to inform and teach, and I shal make him to take as much science and wisdom within four years, as I and all my fellows have learned in all our lives.

Then spake the fifth Master, that was name Iosephus, Lord, I am old, and many times I am called to your Counsel, and you know that my counsel hath availed and profited and so likewise may it do hereafter: yet notwithstanding I desire no more, but that you will deliver me your Son, and I shal instruct and inform him in as much cunning and science, that he within three years shal profit in wit as much as I and all my fellows have.

Then came forth the sixth Master, named Cleophas, who said like to the other, promising him to learn and inform the child in all their cunning in two years.

The seventh Master rose up and said, who also desired the child, and promised to learn him within one year, the sciences and wisdoms of them all.

When all this was done, the Emperour said, My trusty friends, I am very much bound to thank you all and every one of you, for that you have so earnestly with attention desired to foster and instruct my Son: If I should now commit him to one, and not

to an
amon
my S
erpe
the
ed hi
way
with
of pr
knob
delec
pue
wilt
lee a
this
ingl
seven
amo
Diss
to w
to:
Th
said
of h
or fe
well
freq
up y
sleep
the
ing
shal
F
T
cr
Son
toer
you
suce
pice
migh
may
ship
that
a pu
you
out
the
ful
self
he f
for
to

The seven Wise Masters.

5

to another, thereon would ensue much dissention and variance among you. Therefore to you all, and every of you, I commit my Son to be nourished and taught. The Masters hearing this, expressing both their greatnes of joy, and forwardnes in will to the Emperor, all with one harmonie of consent took and receiv'd his Son, and led him towards the Court of Rome. Upon the way spake Craton to his fellows: If we this child should teach within the City of Rome, there is so great resort and concourse of people, that it would hinder and let him in his learning: I know a fair place from Rome some two miles, right pleasant and delectable, there let us make a four square Chamber of stone, and put him therein: and upon the walls thereof let us paint and write the seven liberal Arts, so that the child at all times, may see and behold his Doctrine therein as well as in his book: and this advice and counsel pleased them all, and was done accordingly in every point. The Masters diligently every day, during seven years, taught and instructed the child: and determined among themselves, and said, It is good that we examine our Disciple, to see to what perfection our pains hath arriv'd at, and to what strength and growth his vertue and knowledge is come to: and they all wisely and religiously accorded to that Counsel. Then said Master Pantillas, How shal we prove him? Craton said, Let every one of us as he sleepeth put under every corner of his bed an Olive-leaf, and then we shal know if he perceived or felt any thing or not. This done, he awaking, greatly marvelled, and lifted up his eyes towards the roof of the chamber frequently: The Masters seeing that, said, Wherefore lift you up your eyes so sharply? he answered, It is no marvel, for in my sleep I saw the uppermost part of the chamber inclined towards the earth, or else under me it was lifted up. The Masters hearing this, said amongst themselves, If this child may live, he shal be a man of great cunning and fame.

How the Emperor by the Counsel of the great Princes,
and Lords of his Empire, wedded another Wife.

The Princes and great Lords of the Empire in the mean time came to the Emperor and said, My Lord, ye have only but one Son, it is possible that ye might happen to die, and therefore it were profitable that you would wed another Wife, that thereby your joys and hopes might be bless'd with more certainty, and assured happines in your race and issue, to the intent that the Empire of Rome be not left without an heir. Moreover, ye are so mighty, that if it should happen you to get many children: ye may promote and advance them all to great Dignities and Lordships. Whereunto answered the Emperor, Is it your counsel that I shal take another Wife? Then seek me one that is gracious, a pure Virgin, fair and gentle born, and then I shal follow your counsel and advice. They went and sought and searched out many Kingdoms and Countries, and at the last they found the Kings Daughter of Castile, that was right fair and beautiful, and her they gave the Emperor to wife. Who behaved her self so well, that anon he was so greatly taken in her love, that he forgot all the heaviness and sorrow of heart, that he had taken for the death of his first wife. And when they had lived long together

gether without children, and the Emperours saw well that she might not conceive, then when she heard that the Emperour had a Son with the seven wise Masters to be fostered and taught, to the great good and profit of the Empire, she thought in her self, and wished his death. And from that hour forth, she imagined how she might conspire his destruction. It happened on a night as the Emperour lay in his bed, he said to the emperess, My most dear and best beloved Wife, I shall now shew and open to you the secrets of my heart: for under the sun there is no creature that I love so well as you, and therefore trust in my love.

Then said the fair emperess, If it be so as you say, I require of you one little boon or petition. Desire what you will, said the emperor, and all that to me is possible, I shall fulfil and give it to you. Then said the emperess, My dear Lord, you know I have no child by you yet conceived, for which I am lost penitence and heavy: but fame that never conceals it self long to true joy, hath delivered this happy truth to me, that ye have one son only, the which is set to the seven wise Masters to be taught and governed, and him hold I: and repute for my own son: wherefore I beseech you that ye will send for him, that I may see him, and have consolation of his presence, as though he were mine own. Whereupon answered the emperor: It is sixteen years past since that I saw him: your will shall be fulfilled. Incontinent the emperor sent unto the seven wise Masters a Letter, sealed with his secret Sign, that upon pain of death they should bring his Son in the feast of Pentecost following.

How the seven wise Masters after the sight of the Emperours Letters, would first observe the Course and Divine shewings of the firmament and Planets, whether it were good to obey his Commandment, or not.

As as the Masters had read the Letter, and had understood the will of the emperor, in the night time they went, and beheld the Stars in the firmament, whether it would be expedient to take their journey with the child after the emperours will or not: And they saw clearly in the Stars, that if they should lead the child in that time assigned; at the first word he should speak, he should die an evil death: Wherefore they were all right sorry: and as they beheld another Star, they saw, that if they delivered not the child at the day aforesaid, they should lose their heads. Then said one of them, of two evils the least is to be chosen: it is better that all we die, than that the child should lose his life: therefore that we may save the childs life, let us go to the emperor. And as they were thus sorrowful, the child came down from his chamber, and seeing his Masters so heavy, he demanded them the cause of their heaviness, whereupon they answered, Sir, we have received your Fathers Letters, that upon pain of death now in this high feast of Pentecost we should lead you to your Country, whereupon we have beheld the firmament, whereby we clearly see and find, that if we within the time before pledged, present you to your Father, at the first word that ye shall pronounce out of your mouth, ye shall be to the most cruel death condemned. Then said the child, I must also

behold

The seven Wise Masters.

behold the Armament with the stars, and so he did, and found clear in a little star, that if he could abstain from speaking seven dayes, he should be preserved and save his life. And after he had seen this, he called the Masters, and shewed them the star, and said, Behold my dear Masters, I see periculis in the star, that if I abstain my self by the space of seven dayes, I shal save my life. We are now seven Masters, the wisest of all the world, it is an easie thing for you, that every of you for me one day to answer, and with your wife answer every of you his day, my life may save and keep: and in the eight day shal speak of my self, and save my life and all you from perill. As the Masters had beholden that certain star, they judged with themselves that the child had said truth, saying: Almighty God be thanked, that thee wisdom and cunning of our Disciple exceedeth us all. Then said the first Master Pantillas, Lord, I shal speak for you the first day, and save your life. And Lentulus the second Master said, I shal for you the second day answer: and so consequently every of them promised to answer for himself his day. And thus said they clothed the child in purple, and leapt on horse-back with a fair company, and hasted them with the child to the Emperour.

How the Emperour rode to meet his Son coming from study with much joy, solemnity, and triumph.

When the Emperour perceived that his Son was coming upon the way, he rode with great joy to meet him. The Masters understanding the coming of the Emperour, said unto the child, It is best that we depart, that in the mean while we may provide how we may save your life. The child said, It pleaseth me well that you do so, but have mind of me in time of my necessity: of they took leave and departed towards the City, and the child came after accompanied most honorably. And as he and his Father the Emperour met, for joy and gladness he took his son about the neck and kissed him, and said, My dear son, now is my joy compleat, beholding in thee the treasure of my lifes comfort. How is it with you: It is long since, that I saw you. He bowed down his head and answered nothing: The Father had great wonder why that he spake not, and thought in himself that his Masters had informed him so, that he riding should not speak. And when they were come into the Palace, and were descended from their horses, the Father took his Son by the hand, and led him into the hall, and set him next him, and beheld him, and said, Tell me now how it is with you: How have they instructed you, these many yeares past since I saw you: But he inclined down his head, and spake not: The father said, Wherefore speak ye not to me: When the Emperours heard that the Emperours Son was come, he was right joyous and glad, and said, I will go see him. She apparellled her self with rich attires, and took with her two of her Gentlewoman, and went there as the Emperour was sitting with his son, and sat her down by the child, and she said to the Emperour, Is this your Son, that hath been nourished with the seven wise-masters: And he said, It is my Son, but he speaketh not. She said, Deliver to me your son,

and if ever he speak, I will make him so speak. Then said the Emperor, Rise, and go with her. The Son did reverence to his Father, as though he said, I am ready to accomplish your will, and so went with her.

How the Empress led Dioclesian the Emperors Son with her into her chamber, for to make good cheer with him, the which he withstood.

The Empress led him with her into her chamber, & commanded all other to avoid, and let him by her aloze her bed-side, and said: O my best beloved Dioclesian, I have heard much of your person and beauty; but now I am glad that I may see that with mine eyes, which my heart coveteth and loveth: for I have caused your Father to send for you, that I might have solace and joy of your person: wherefore right heartily I give you knowledge. That I for your love unto this day, have kept my virginity: speak to me therefore, and let us go to bed together: but he gave her no answer. She seeing that, said to him: O good Dioclesian, which hast the half of my soul, why speak ye not to me or at the least show me some token of love, what shall I do: speak to me: I am ready to fulfil and perform your will. And when he had thus said, he embraced him, and would have kissed his mouth: but he turned his visage from her and in no wise would consent. Then said she again unto him: O Son, wherefore do ye thus with me: let us sleep together, and then shall ye well perceive that for your love I have kept my virginity: but he turned his visage again from her. She seeing that of her he was ashamed, shewing unto him her naked body and breasts, & said: Behold, my son, what body I have, it is at your will, a servant and subject to your delight and pleasure: give me your consent, or else it shall be hard for me to depart hence with my right mind. He neither showed her any manner of love, but as much as he could, withdrew himself from her. When she saw that, she said: O my sweet son, if it please you not to consent unto me yet speak, perhaps for some reasonable cause: so, here is pen, ink and paper, then write your will, whether I may at any time hereafter, trust in your love or not: The child wrote as hereafter followeth: O Lady, God forbid that I should defile my Fathers orchard: for I wot not what fruits I should have of it. I know well one thing, that I should sin greatly in the sight of God, and also run in the malediction of my Father, and therefore from henceforth. I pray you, to provoke and stir me no more thereto. When she had seen and read the writing, she tore it with her teeth, and rent her cloaths to her navel, and also scratched her visage, until it was all bloody, and cast from her all the ornaments of her head, and cried out with a loud voice Come hither, my Lords and help me, lest that this rude and full body shame and cavish me.

How the Empress complained to the Emperor of the shame done unto her by his.

The Emperor being in the hall, and hearing the noise and cry of the empress, he hastily ran toward her chamber, with many

The seven Wise Masters.

19

his Knights, and others of his servants following him, to see what
 as the matter. Then began the emperess to cry, and speak to the
 emperor in this wise: O my Lord, have pity and compassion up-
 on me: behold, this young man is not your Son, but the foulest
 ribaldry and actions of luxury, that ever sun and heat put strength
 to: for as you know well, I led him and brought him with me
 to my Chamber, and would have exhorted, and caused him to have
 spoken, I have done as much therefore as I can or may: and would I
 that my words exhorted and moved him to have spoken he hath
 deceived, himself with me to have sinned: and because I
 would not with him consent, but withstood as much as I
 might to fly the same, he hath made my visage all bloody, and hath
 also torn my vesture and ornaments of my head, as you may open-
 ly see: and if you had not soon come unto my calling, he had ended in
 his most foul and wicked appetit. When the emperor saw and
 heard this (filled with great malice and woodness) he commanded
 his servants that they would led him to the gallows and hang him.
 And when the Lords heard thereof, they said, Lord you have no more
 but this Son only, it is not good that ye thus slightly put him to
 death. The Law is ordained for transgressors, and misdoers; And
 he is so that he must die, let him by the Law be, lest it be said that
 he emperor in his great fury and wrath, without Law and Justice,
 hath put his only Son to death. As the emperor heard this, he com-
 manded him to be put in prison, until the time that iudgment was
 given against him. And when the emperess understood that the child
 was not put to death, she cryed, and wept bitterly, and would take
 to rest. When the night was come, the emperor entred into his
 chamber to go to bed, and found his wife weeping and sorrowing:
 to whom he said, O my dear Lady, for what cause are ye sorrowful?
 She answered, Know you not how that your accursed Son hath
 done me so much shame, and so dishonored you, that you have com-
 manded him to be hanged, and yet he liveth, and your word is not
 performed, neither is my shame redressed. To morrow, said the em-
 peror, he shall die by the Law. Then said she, Shall he so long live?
 When might it happen to you, as it did to a Burgess of Rome, of whom
 an example is mentioned. The emperor said, I pray you, shew me
 his example. That shall I do gladly, said the emperess.

The first Example of the Emperess.

In the City of Rome was a Burgess, the which had a fair Garden
 wherein he had standing a noble Tree, the which every year brought
 forth fruit of good vertue: for whosoever ate thereof that were sick
 of any manner of sickness or leprosie, he should soon be whole and
 receive his sight.

It happened upon a day as the Burgess went into his Garden to
 visit and see the Tree, he clyped under the Tree a fair young Imp, and
 called to him the Gardiner, and said, My friend, of this young
 Imp I give thee charge, for I trust of that to plant a better Tree than
 this is: The Gardiner said, I shall do gladly. Another time the
 Burgess came again into his Garden to visit the young Plant, and it
 appeared unto him, that it grew not so much as it should do, and he
 said to the Gardiner, How may this be? And he said, It is no won-
 der, for this great Tree hath so great arms and branches, that
 the air may not come to the root of the young Tree. Then said the
 Burgess, Cut and hew off the arms and the boughs, that the air may

to thereto. The Gardiner did as he was commanded. The Be con
ge came again another time to see the young Plant, and thou ou o
that it grew nebet the better, and said to the Gardiner, What is en y
that letteth this Plant to grow now? And then he said, I suppo efore
the hight of the old Tree letteth the Sun, that the rain may not co your
thereto, and therefore it cannot grow. Then said the Master u
him, hew down that tree to the ground, for I hope of this Plant ough
have a better than ever that was. The Gardiner hearing his Wast en la
obeyed him, and hewed down the Tree, and as soon as this was doffer
the young Plant all wholly perished, and came to nought, where ther
came great harm: for when the poor and sick people perceived, the hope
the Tree was destroyed, they cursed all them that were counsellar, ear,
and helpers thereto, by the which they often times were healed. on, t
cured of their infirmities and maladies. Then said the emperors to n he
Lord, Understand ye what I have said? He answered, Yea, right bi
well: then said he, I will declare to you the meaning of that which in
have said.

The Declaration of the Example.

This Tree, my Lord, betokeneth your most noble Person, now th verr
with your counsel and help, many poor and sick folks are great he w
holpen and comforted: and the young Imp which is grown und wist
the great Tree, is your accursed Son, that now by cunning begi and st
neth to grow, and studieth first how he may cut off the Arms, a ing hi
Boughs of your might, and how to win to him the laud and favor a fa
the people: yea, and more unnaturally, imagineth to destroy yo ood,
Person, that he may himself reign: but what shal then ensue thereo his S
All poor and feeble people shal curse them, who might have destro batt
ed your Son, and have not done it: Therefore I counsel you, whi in his
you are in your power, and living, that ye destroy him, lest that s dial
curse of the people fall upon you. Then said the emperor, Ye ha n. I
given me good counsel: to morrow I shal condemn him to the de alwa
death that can be thought upon. When the day was come, the e fal
peror went and sat in judgement, and commanded his servan prey
that they should lead his Son to be hanged with Trumpets soundi The i
in token of death. And as the emperors son was led through the C upo
the common people began to weep and cry, Alas, the only Son, whic
the emperor is led towards his death: and therewithal came Pa into
tillas the first Master riding upon a horse. When the child saw him and
he bowed his head to him, as though he said, Have mind upon id ly
when you come before my Father, see how I am led towards the S and l
lows. Then the Master said to the servants, Make no haste, for ch.
hope by the grace of God this day to deliver him from death. Th al th
said all the people, O good Master, haste you to the Palace, a he w
save your Disciple. We smote the horse with the spurs till he can non
to the Palace, and kneeled to the Emperor, and did him reverence ards
So to whom the emperor said, It shal never be to thee good, who a reid
vered, I have deserved a better reward. The emperor said, Th de su
lish, for I delivered him to thee in all things well mannered a y-ho
now he is brought home dumb, and hath sought to work his will chil
the shame of my veruous emperors, and to the dishonor of his Father g to
hed for ever, therefore this day he shal die: and ye shal all die the g
shameful death. Then said the Master, Lord, forasmuch as your S all
speaketh not, the cause thereof God knoweth, and without cau youn
it is not, as ye shal understand: and where you say, that he wou fore t
ha

The seven Wise Masters.

11

he committed this sin of inforcement on your emper, I shal say
 of a truth, he hath been in our company, by the space of
 ten years, and we never could perceive such abuse by him. And
 therefore, my dear Lord, I shal shew you one thing, that if you
 your Son to death for the words of your Wife, it shal happen
 you twofold than to a Knight, which killed his best gray-hound
 the words of his Wife, which saved his Son from death.
 en said the emperor to the Master, Tell me that example. The
 Master said, Lord, that shal I not do, for before I shal make an
 thereof your Son might be dead, and then in vain, and with-
 hope should I rehearse it: but if it please you this noble example
 hear, call again your Son till to morrow, and as you think by
 on, then do with him your pleasure. As the emperor heard that,
 he twilled the child to be called again, and in the mean time
 him in prison while the Master finished his tale, and then he
 in this manner following.

The Example of the first Master.

There was a valiant Knight which had one only Son as you have,
 which he loved so much, that he ordained for his keepers three
 withers. The first should give him suck, and feed him. The
 and should wash him, and keep him clean: and the third should
 him to his sleep and rest. The Knight had also a gray-hound
 a falcon, which he also loved right well. The gray-hound was
 good, that he never run at any game, but he took it, and held it
 his Master came. And if his Master disposed him to go unto
 battel, if he should not speed therein, anon as he should mount
 his horse, the gray-hound would take the horse-tail in his mouth,
 and draw backward, and would also cry and howl marvellously.
 By these signs, and the due observation thereof, the Knight
 always understand, that his journey should have very ill success.
 the falcon was so gentle and hardy, that he was never cast off to
 prey but he took it.

The same Knight had much pleasure in Jousting and Tourney, so
 upon a time under his Castle he proclaimed a Tournament, to
 which came many great Lords and Knights. The Knight en-
 into the Tourney, and his Lady went with her maidens to see
 and as they went out, after went the withers, and left the
 lying alone there in the cradle, in the hall: where the gray-
 and lay near the wall, and the hawk or falcon standing upon a
 perch. In this hall there was a serpent lurking, by hid in a hole,
 all them of the Castle unknowing, the which when he perceived that
 were all absent, he put his head out of his hole, and when he
 none but the child lying in the cradle, he went out of his hole
 towards the cradle, for to have slain the child. The noble Falcon
 seeing that, and he beholding the gray-hound that was sleeping,
 he such a noise, and rustling with her wings presently, that the
 gray-hound awoke, and rose up: and when he saw the serpent nigh
 child, anon against him he leapt, and they both fought so
 together, until that the serpent had grievously hurt and wound-
 the gray-hound, that he bled so sore, that the earth about the cradle
 was all bloody. The gray-hound when that he felt himself grievous-
 wounded and hurt, darted fiercely upon the serpent, and fought
 together, and so eagerly, that between them the cradle was
 broken.

overcast with the Child, the bottom upward.

And because that the cradle had four corners like feet, falling towards the earth, they saved the child's life, and his visage from hurt: what can be more expert to make good the wonder in the destruction of the child? Incontinently hereafter, with great noise the gray-hound overcame and slew the serpent, and laid him down again in his place; and licked his wounds. And anon after Juss and Journey was done, the Nobles came first into the Cradle, and as they saw the cradle turned the up side down upon earth compassed round about with blood: and that the gray-hound was also bloody, they thought and said among themselves, that the gray-hound had slain the Child: and were not so wise as to turn up the Cradle again with the Child, for to have seen what he thereof befallen. But they said, Let us run away, lest that the Father should put or lay the blame upon us, and so slay us. They were thus running away, they met the Knights, and said unto them, Wherefore make ye this sorrow, and together ye run? Then said they, O Lady, wo and sorrow be to us, and to you. Why, said she, what is there happened? Show me. The gray-hound, they said, that our Lord and Father loved so dearly, hath devoured and slain your Son, and lyeth by the wall all full of blood. As the Lady heard this, she presently fell to the earth, and began to weep and cry pitiously, and said, Alack, O my dear Son, are ye thus slain and dead? What shall I now do, that I may mine only Son thus lost? Wherewithal came in the Knight from the Journey, beholding his Lady thus crying and making lamentation: He demanded of her, wherefore she made so great sorrow and lamentation: She answered him, O my Lord, that gray-hound that I have loved so much, hath slain your only Son, and lyeth by the wall, satiated with the blood of the child: The Knight very exceeding grieved, went into the hall, and the gray-hound went to meet him, and did fall upon him as he was wont to do, and the Knight drew his sword, and with one stroke smote off the gray-hound's head, then he went to the cradle where the child lay, and found him all whole, and by the cradle the serpent slain; and then by his signs, he perceived that the gray-hound had killed the serpent for defence of the child. Then with great sorrow and weeping he took his hair, and said, O to be to me, that for the words of my wife I have slain my good and best gray-hound, the which hath saved the child's life, and hath slain the serpent: therefore I will put me to penance: and so he brake his sword in three pieces, and went towards the holy Land, and abode there all the days of his life. Then said the Father to the Emperor, Lord, understand ye what I have said? And he answered and said, Right well. The Father said, If you do put your Son to death for the words of your wife, what happen to you worse than it did to the Knight for his gray-hound? The emperor said, Ye have shewed me a fair example, and without doubt this day my Son shall not die. Then said the Father, If I do so, you do wisely, and I thank you, that you have not slain him this day for my sake.

The second Complaint of the Empress. A sorrow mingled with much cunning and falsehood.

When the empress heard that the child was not yet dead, she be-

The seven Wise Masters.

to weep bitterly, and sat her down on the earth in ashes, and would not lift up her head: when the emperor heard that, he entered into the Chamber, and said unto her, O good Wife, wherefore make you this sorrow, and trouble your self so much? She said, Ask ye that of me, know ye not well what great despite and shame I have suffered of your unhappy Son, and how you have promised me that you would see justice to be therefore executed on him, and yet he lieth? Of a truth it will be given to you, as it happened to a shepherd and a boar. The emperor said, I pray you shew me that example for my learning. She said, As yesterday I shewed you one, and saw no good effect that came thereof, to what end should I now do the like? Nevertheless I shall declare this noble example unto you, as hereafter you shall hear.

The second Example of the Empress.

There was sometime an Emperor, the which had a great forest, wherein was a wild boar, which was so cruel and so fierce, that he killed and devoured men going through the forest. The emperor therefore being right heavy, proclaimed throughout all his Dominions, that whosoever he was that could slay the boar, should have his only Daughter to wife, and therewith the empire after his death: and as this was in places proclaimed, there was not one man found that durst give this adventure: But there was a shepherd who thought in himself; Wight I the boar overcome and slay, I should not only advantage my self, but also my generation and kindred: So then he took his shepherds staff in his hand, and went to the forest: and as the boar had of him a sight, he drew towards the herdsman, but he for fear climbed upon a tree, and then the boar began to bite and gnaw the tree.

So the herd thought shortly that he would have overthrown it. This tree was loaden with great plenty of fruit, and the herd gathered and plucked thereof, and cast them to the boar, in so much that when he was filled therewith, he laid him down to sleep: the which when the herd perceived, by little and little descended the tree, and with the one hand he clawed the boar, and with the other held him upon the tree, and seeing that the boar slept very soundly, he drew out his knife, and smote the boar to the heart, and killed him: And so shortly after he wedded the Emperors Daughter: and after the death of her father, he was made Emperor. Then said he, My Lord, wot ye not what I have said? He said, Right well: Then said he, This mighty boar betokeneth your most noble Person, against whom may no man withstand, neither by wisdom, nor with strength. This shepherd with his staff, is the person of your ungracious son, who with his staff of cunning, began to play with you, as the herdsman clawed the boar, and made him to sleep and after killeth him. In the same manner the Masters of your Son, by their false fables and narrations clasp you, and close with you, until the time that your Son slay you, that he may reign. Then said the emperor, God forbid that they should do to me as he did to the wild boar: and he said unto her, This day my Son shall die: and she answered, if you do so, then do ye wisely. Then the emperor the second time sitting in judgement, commanded to lead him to the place of execution appointed for that purpose: and whilst he was going, the second Master came before the emperor, doing him great reverence.

renewt, as before is shewed in the coming of the first Master: to whom the second Master said, O my Lord and Emperour, if you should slay your Son for the words of your wife, it shal happen woyle to you than it did to a certain Knight, which for the words of his wife was unniuely put upon the Pillorie. The emperour saith, O good Master, tell me how that happened. And he said, My Lord, I shal not say it unless you will call your only Son from the death, until the time that the example be told, the which if it turn not you from your purpose, then your will be fulfilled. Then the emperour commanded that the child should be called again: and under this manner that followeth, the second master began to tell.

- The Example of the second Master.

In a City was an ancient Knight which wedded a young wife, I and fair as ye have done, whom he loved above all earthy things. This Knight was a very circumspect and careful husband, in so much that every night he locked in the doo with his own hands, and led the keys, under his beds head. In that City there was a Law or Custom, that at a certain hour in the night a bell was used to be rung, that after the ringing of the said bell, if any man or woman were by the watch-men found about the streets, all that night they should be kept fast in prison, and on the morrow set fast upon a pillory, that all the people might behold and wonder at them.

This fore-said Knight had little mind or lust of fleshy deeds, for that he was very old, and might not satiate or perform the desires and appetites of his young wife: wherefore every night she having a paramour, her husband sleeping, took the keys from under his beds head, and went to her love: and when she came again, all privately she laid the keys under her husbands head: and thus she played many a time.

So it happened upon a night, that the Knight awaked out of his sleep, and missed his wife, and also the keys under his beds head, whereupon he then rose up, and went unto the doo, and found them open, the which he closed and bolted fast within, and then went up again into his Chamber, and looked out at the window towards the street: and when it was near about the third rocks crows, his wife came from her best beloved, and found the doo shut and bolted within: then was she sorrowful, nevertheless she knocked to have come in. Then spake the Knight out of the window: O thou most wicked and unclean wife, now I know, and am expert that many times thou hast forsaken my bed, and gone and done adultery: now thou shalt stand until the bell be rung, and that the watch-men may take thee, and do with thee according to the Law. His wife answered, My Lord, why do ye say that to me? For in very truth, the cause of my being abroad, was for no ill, but I was called by my mothers maid, and fetched in the night: and when I saw you sleep so sweetly, I durst not awake you, because that you are old, and therefore I took the keys, and went to my mother, the which is now sick, that I fear to morrow she must be anointed, or annihilated: notwithstanding, for because that I would not you offend, I have bailed me again unto you, and have left her lying in great pain and infirmity: therefore, I pray you, for the love of God, let me in before the bell ringeth. The Knight answered, Ye shal not so come in, ye must there abide until the time that the bell ringeth, and

and until that the watch-men come and take you, Then said she
 that should be to you, and unto me, and to all our friends and
 indred, a great shame and rebuke: therefore for the reverence of
 Almighty God, let me come in. Then said he, Have in thy mind,
 will and falls twice, how often times thou hast forsaken my bed, and
 gone adulterie: it is much better that thou suffer shame, and bewail
 of thy sins here in this world, then for to suffer pain in hell. She
 said again to him, I pray you, for the love of him that was crucified,
 and died on the Cross, have mercy on me. The Knight said, Thou
 abidest in vain for thou shalt not come in, but thou shalt carry the
 coming of the watch-men. She hearing that, said, My Lord, ye
 know that by this doo hangeth a well, if you let me not come in, I
 shall therein drown my self, rather than all my friends should be
 shamed for me. Then said he, would to God thou hadst been
 drowned long before that ever thou camest in my bed. As they thus
 spake together, the Moon went down, and all was very dark: then
 said she, If it will not otherwise be, I shall drown my self: but yet
 before, like a true Christian woman, I will make my Testament.
 First, I bequeath to God my soul, and my body to be buried in
 the Church of S. Peter: and of all other things and goods that God
 hath sent me, I give unto you to dispose for my Soul, after your
 wisdom and discretion. And when she had thus said, she went unto
 the well, and there lying a great stone, with both her arms she life
 it up, and said, Now I drown my self, and so cast the stone down
 into the well, and went again privately, and stood by the doo. The
 Knight hearing the noise, cryed with a loud voice, saying, Alace,
 alace, my sweet wife is drowned: And so hastily came down, and
 ran to the well: and when she saw that the doo was open, presently
 he entered in, and locked the doo, and went up into the Chamber,
 and lay, and looked out of the window. The Knight stood by the
 well, and cryed, and wept bitterly, and said, Who be to me, I
 have now lost my best beloved wife: now cursed be the time that I
 made fast the doo against her. While the Lady heard that, she said,
 O thou cursed old greyard, why standest thou there at this time of
 the night? Was not my body to you sufficient? Wherefore do you
 thus go every night to your harlots and your whores, and leave my
 bed? As he heard the voice of his wife, he was right glad, and
 said, Blessed be God, that yet she is not drowned. But, my good
 lady, wherefore do you lay such things against me? I thought to
 have chastised you, and therefore I locked fast the doo, but in no
 wise I intended it to your peril: ye know well what sorrow I made
 of you, when I heard you to have fallen into the well, and there-
 fore I came, thinking to have helped you. Whereupon she said, Thou
 art falsely, I never committed such faults as thou layest to me:
 but it appeareth by a common Proverb, He that is guilty of culpa-
 ble himself in a sin, he judgeth every man to be in the same: or else,
 The Father never sought his Son in the oven, except he had been
 therein himself. In like case conceivest thou a false surmise of me:
 but one thing I promise thee, thou shalt abide there until the watch-
 men come, and the bell be rung, that they may lead thee before the
 judges, to abide and suffer the Law. Then said the Knight, Where-
 fore lay ye such things to me that am old, impotent, and most un-
 meet to delight in such a game? I have dwelt long in this City,
 and never was defamed, and therefore let me in, that to me and to
 you

your self, ye do no shame. She said. Be lay in vain, it is better
 that ye forsething your sins in this world, than in hell. Waxe in mind
 what the wise man saith, A poor man proud, a rich man a liar
 and an old man a fool. God hateth: so be you a fool and rich. With
 need was it for you to slander me, and cannot be content when
 you have the flower of my youth at your pleasure, but yet runneth
 to harlots, and therefore it is the great grace of God that you have
 time and space to forsethink it, lest ye should perish, and be damned
 for more sins, and therefore suffer your penance patiently? That the
 Knight said, O my best beloved Lady, although it be so, yet is God
 merciful, and he asketh nothing of a sinner, but that he amend his
 life, and forsethink himself, and do penance for his sins. Now I
 come in, and I will make amends. She said. What devil hath
 made you so good a preacher? But so you come not in. And as she
 thus spake, the bell rung, and then he intreated very fervently. Sa-
 ing, Now suffer me to come in, that I be not ashamed for ever. She
 answered, the ringing of the bell doth pretend the health of your
 soul. And as this was said, then presently came the watch men
 about the City, and found the Knight standing in the street, and
 said unto him, O good man, it is not good that ye stand here in the
 hour in the night. As he heard the voice of the watch men, he said
 Good fellows, avenge me on that old accursed whoore hunter, for I
 know whose daughter I am. This cursed old man is wont every
 night to leave my bed, and go to his whores and harlots. I have
 long time forsook him, and would not show it, nor complain on him
 to my friends: for I trusted that he would have amended his misdeed
 and it helped not: and therefore take him, and punish him after the
 Law, that all such old doers may take example by him. Then the
 watch men took him, and all night chafed him in prison, and in
 the morning they put him on the Gallows. Now, said the Father
 the Emperor, I have ye understood what I have said? And he
 said, Right well. Then said the Father, If you put to death your
 Son by the indignation of your wife, it shall chance unto you worse
 than to the Knight.

The Emperor said, he was the worst woman that ever I heard
 of, that so falsely brought her husband to shame and rebuke: I shall
 unto you, Father, that for the reason of this example, my Son shall
 not die this day. The Father said unto him, If you do so, then
 you do wisely, and that hereafter you shall joy: So I commit you
 to God, and thank you for your patient hearing, and for the sparing
 your Son, and so he departed.

The third Complaint of the Empress, more full of cunning
 and dissembling sorrow than the former.

When the Empress heard that the child was not dead, she wept
 bitterly, and entered into her privy Chamber, and tare her
 skin with her nails, and with a loud voice cried, Alas, that ever
 was born, that I so great a Kings Daughter should be thus inter-
 ted and ashamed, and therefore can have no remedy. Her gentle
 woman hearing this, turned and shewed it to the Emperor, and
 went unto her, and comforted her, saying, O Lady, weep not,
 nor cry not, for it becometh you not. She answered, The love
 that I have, and owe unto you, maketh me more sorrowful than the com-
 tempt of death: for why the inward love of your heart, hath hitherto
 withheld

obscured, and letted me, that I have not returned again into my country to my Father, but I fear should I so do, it might turn to our harm; for he is mighty to honor me with his riches, and to revenge my quarrel and despight in such wise that ye might repent. Amhereto said the emperor. Let that pass out of your mind, neither repeat it any more, for as long as I live, I shall never fail you. And she said, Lord, I pray God that you may long live: but I fear that it shall happen to you, as it befel to a Knight and his Son, that would not bury his Fathers head in the Church-yard, and yet his Father slay for him. Then said the emperor. Show me the example how it was that he would not bury his fathers head. She said, I shall do it for your profit.

The third Example of the Emperors.

In the City of Rome there was a Knight which had two daughters and one son. And this Knight had so great delight in Hunting, Hunting and Tourney, that all things that he might win and get, he laid and spent it thereupon. In that time lived an emperor named Oravian, which in his riches of gold and silver exceeded all other Kings and Princes, insomuch that he had a Tower full of gold and ordained a Knight to have the keeping and charge thereof. This Knight had so haunted Hunting, and other idle games, came to so great poverty that he was forced out of the extremity of his adverse fortunes, to sell his Heritage, and called to him his Son, and said, My Son, it becometh me of your counsel, for necessity and poverty compelleth me to sell mine heritage, or else to find some other way whereby I may live: for if I should sell mine Heritage, both you and your sisters should perish. Then the Son said, Father, if I can find any manner of means without selling of your Heritage, I should be ready to help you. The Father said, I have thought on a good counsel: The emperor hath a great Tower full of gold, by long time let us together with instruments, dig and bore thoro the Tower, and let us take of the gold as much as shall suffice us, whereunto the Son answered, and said, That counsel cannot be amended, for it is better of emperors gold to take, to help us, then to sell our Heritage.

So they rose up both in the night, and went to the Tower, and with instruments they made a hole thoro the wall, and took as much gold as they could both carry away at that time, and the Knight payed his debts, and haunted again Hunts, as he did before, until all was spent and consumed. In the mean while the keeper of the treasure went into the Tower, and when he saw the treasure stolen, and a great hole made thoro the wall, he began to woe and be afraid, and went unto the emperor, and shewed how it was fallen. To whom the emperor said all angry, What needest thou to shew that, have I not delivered to thee my treasure, and therefore of thee I will ask it? Anone as the keeper heard that, he went to the Tower again, and set before the hole a great vessel full of pitch melted, with other gums of subtilty, that no man might come in at that hole, but he must needs fall into that vessel: and if he had therein fell, he could no more come out of it. Not long after, the Knight had all the gold consumed and spent, and he came again with his son to the Tower to steal more gold. And as the Father went first, anon he was fallen into the vessel full of pitch to the neck, and

when he said that he was taken, and could not get out, he said to his Son, Follow me not, for if thou dost, thou canst not escape by any means. Then said the Son, God defend that I should not be you: For if you are found, we are all but dead, and that if you may not be holpen by me, I shall seek counsel how that you may be delivered and holpen. The Father said, There is none other counsel but with thy sword smite off my head, and as my body is found without an head, no man shall know me, and so thou and my daughter may escape, and avoid this worldly shame and death. The Son said to his Father, ye have given the best counsel: for if it were so that any man might perceive any knowledge of you, none of us all shall escape the death, and it is expedient that your head be smitten off: anon he drew out his sword, and smote off his Fathers head, and cast it into a pit, and then went and shewed unto his sisters all the matter: how many days after privately he wailed the death of their Father. After this the keeper of the treasure came into the Tower, and found a body without a head: whereat he wondered sore, and shewed it to the Emperor: to whom he said, Bind that body at the tail of an horse, and so draw it through all the streets of the City, and diligently take good heed if ye hear any cry, or weeping, wheresoever ye hear that he is the Lord of the house: take all of them, and the body, draw them to the gallows and hang them. The which the Emperor's servants fulfilled according to his commandment: and as they came against the house of the dead Knight, the daughters seeing the body of their dead Father, made a marvelous great shriek, and wept pitifully: and as their brother heard that, anon he wounded himself with a knife, so that great plenty of blood came out of the wound. The Officers when they heard the cry, entered into the house, demanding the cause of their clamor. Then answered the Son, they lament because I am thus wounded: For when my sisters saw my blood abundantly to go out as you see, they began to weep and cry: and when the Officers saw the wound, they believed his words, and deceived went their ways, and hung the Knights body upon the gallows, where he hang a long time, and his Son would neither take his body down from the gallows, nor yet bury his head. The Emperors said, Understand ye what I have said. The Emperor said right well.

The declaration of the Example.

Then spake the Emperors thus: My Lord, I fear it will so chancel to you and to your son: this Knight for the love of his son was made poor, and first he committed theft, and brake the tower: secondly, caused himself to be beheaded, that his children should have no shame: after the son cast his head into the ditch, and buried it not neither in Church nor Church-yard, and his body he suffered to hang still upon the gallows: If that he could not have taken it down in the day, he might well have done it in the night. In the same manner ye labor night and day, that ye may promote your Son to honor and riches, but without doubt he laboreth for your confusion and destruction, that he may reign after you in your Empire. Therefore I advise you, that you speedily take away his life: who living might suddenly prove the destruction of yours. The Emperor said, You have shewed me a good example. The Knights son when he had smitten off his fathers head, would not bury it: without doubt my

son shal not do so to me: but he anon commanded his officers that they should lead him to the gallows; and they all obeyed his commandment hastily: And as they led him through the streets, the people made a great noise and lamentation, crying, Alace, alace, the only Son of the Emperour is led again toward the gallows: and as they led him, the third Master named Craton, came riding upon an horse: and as the child saw him, he did bow down his head to him, as though he had said, Have mind upon me. The people cryed, saying, O good Master, haste you, and save your Disciple, and so he mote his horse with his spurs, and hasted him to the Palace. And when he came before the Emperour, he honorably saluted him: who said, Thy coming hither shal nothing avail thee, for I think it long until I be revenged on thee. The Master said, I hoped at my coming to have been welcome, and to have had a better reward, and not to be rebuked. The Emperour said, As ye have deserved, so shal I be to you. To whom he said, My Lord, what have I deserved? The Emperour said, Ye right well deserve death: for I delivered you my Son well speaking, and well mannered, for to be informed and taught: and ye have delivered him again unto me dumb, and a ravauld. To whom the Master said, In that you say he is dumb, that I commit to God, for he makes the dumb to speak, and deaf to hear. But in that you say, he would have enforced your wife, that would I gladly know, if any creature hath seen that, for there is no malice above the malice of a woman, and that shal I prove by a good example, that a woman is full of falshood and unknown secrets: and if you put to death your Son for the words of your wife, it shal happen unto you, as it did to a noble man of his wife and his eye, the which he lived marvelously. To whom the Emperour said, I pray you tell me how that women are full of malice and leasings, who said, I will not shew it, but if you will first call again your Son from death, then at your pleasure I shal shew the example. Then the Emperour anon made his Son to be called again, and to be put in prison. Then the Master began to tell the example, in this manner and form following.

The Example of the third Master.

There was in a City a rich Burgess that had a Wyfe, the which he loved so well, that every day he taught her to speak Latine and Hebrew: and when she had learned very perfectly to speak those two Languages, all that she saw and heard, she shewed and told her Master.

This young man had a fair young wife, as ye have, the which he loved full well: but she on the contrary loved him not, because he was not of that lascivious performance, for to answer her lusts according to the bight of her desire: and therefore she had another fair young man that she loved above her husband: and always as her husband was out of the Town, about his merchandise and other business, she sent for her best beloved, that they might make good cheer together. The Wyfe as she espied that, told it to her Master at his coming home, in such a manner, as the noise thereof ran all over the City of her adultery, wherefore her husband many times brauled and chid with her. She answered him, Ye believe your cursed Wyfe which as long as she liveth shal always make betwixt us variance and discord: and he said, That Wyfe cannot lie, for what she seeth

and heareth, that he telleth me; and therefore I believe her more than you. It fortuned that this man went into a far Country about his merchandise, and as soon as he was gone, his wife sent for her friend and love to solace and make good cheer with him: but he durst not come by day light, but abode until the evening, lest he should be marked and seen of the people, and when the night was come, the noise was knocked at the gate, and she was ready and opened it: He said, I fear that the cursed Pye should accuse us: for by her is come great slander upon us through the City: enter in, she said boldly, and see by not. And as they should pass through the hall, where the pye was in her cage, she heard him say these words, O my best beloved, I fear to me greatly lest that the Pye should betray us. And as the woman heard that, she said, Be still, fool, it is dark, she may not see you: a Then the Pye hearing that said, If I see thee not, I hear thy voice behind, and thou dost wrong unto my Father, for thou sleepest with my mad wretches, and when my Father cometh I shall tell him. The younger man hearing that, said, Told I not you that the Pye would discover truth us? And the wife said, Fear not, for this night we will be avenged on the Pye, and so they entered into the Chamber, and slept together that night. About midnight the wife arose, and called her maid, and made her fetch a ladder, and let it up to the roof of the house, that night I may revenge me on the Pye. The maid did even so, so they went up both and made a hole through the covering of the house right over the Pye, and there they cast sand, clay, stones, and water upon the Pye, insomuch that the poor Pye was almost dead: and on the morrow the young man went out early at the back door. And when the good man was come home, as his custom was, he went and visited the Pye, and said to her, O Pye, my beloved bird, tell me how thou hast farred the whistles that I have been out? She said, Master I shall tell you tidings that I have heard: your wife, as soon as you were gone, by the night time she let a man come in. And as soon as I heard that, I told him that I would show it to you, at your coming home, yet notwithstanding she led him into your Chamber and slept with him all night: you ask me also how that I have done in your absence, and I say to you of a truth, that I never was so near my death, as I was that same night, with snow, hail, and rain, that fell upon me so long together, that I was almost left for dead. The wife when she heard that, said to her husband, Sir, you believe in your Pye, now you may hear what she saith: she complaineth that in that same night there fell so much snow, hail, and rain upon her, that she was almost dead: and yet there was none of all them that same night, for there was not in the year a fairer and clearer night than it was: and therefore from henceforth believe her not. Then he went to the good man to his neighbors, and asked of them, if that night there were any tempest or rain? They answered, that some of them walked that night, and in all that year, they had not seen a fairer night. Then went he to his house, and said to his wife, I have found you out by a truth, for the night was very fair and clear, as I understand of your neighbors. You may now know of a truth, said she, that the Pye is a liar, with her sayings she hath sown and made much discord betwixt us: and moreover, I am defamed through the City in her false sayings. Then the Burgers went unto the Pye, and said, O Pye, wherefore hast thou made lies and false tales betwixt me and my wife? Is this the thanks that I have for the meat that I was wont

er more the with my own hands every day: and thou hast alio
 cry aboute brought my wife into great defamacion and disgrace through
 t for her colour? The Dye answered, God knoweth I cannot lie, for
 he dyes which I saw and heard, have I shewed unto you. Then said he
 should thou liest, thou hast said unto me, that in the same night was hail,
 ne, then snow, and rain. that thou hast near hand lost thy life, which is
 for sake of false: And therefore from henceforth thou shalt make no more
 ne greivings, nor discords betwixt me and my wife, and so took the Dye
 and she broke her neck.

When as the wife saw that, she was glad and said, Now have you
 I feare well, now may we all our days live in rest and peace. And
 the when he had slain the Dye, he looked up and saw in the top of the
 see yowse a ladder, and a vessel with water, sand and stones: and wher
 by voice beheld that he perceived the falshood of his wife and cryed with a
 my mind voice, Who be to me, that for my wifes words I have slain my
 young, and also my solace and joy lost, the which in all things said to
 discorde truth. And as he had thus done, anon for sorrow he left his mer-
 vengeance and all his house, and went towards the holy Land, and ne-
 together turned again towards his wife. Then the Master said to the
 said an emperor, Sir, have ye understood what I said? He answered,
 se, thought well. The Master said, Was not that a false and cursed wife,
 ye would so by her falshood, deceit, and cunning, caused the Dye to be slain?
 the over the Emperor said, In truth she was full of fallens: it pitieth
 r upon greatly to think upon the Dye, the which for her true saying lost
 on her life. Verily, I say unto you, that you have told me a very false
 to be an example: therefore this day my Son shal not die. Then said the Ma-
 and wiser, Sir, you do wisely, and I thank you that you have spared your
 ne honor on this day for my sake, and so to God I commend you.

The fourth Complaint of the Empress.

When the Empress heard that the child was not dead, she made a
 great noise and crying, in such wise that she was heard througho
 the palace, and said, Who be unto me, that ever I was made empress,
 I should God that I had died, when I was first brought into these
 was such. When the Emperor heard the voice and cry that she made, he
 he rained into the chamber, and comforted her as much as he could,
 dead and demanded the cause of her lamentation. Who said, O mine
 believe on Lord, have you no wonder, though that I be in this sorrow and
 that is gone, for I am your wife, and in your company by your Son I am
 in her, hamed, and ye saw lately the bloody marks of his enforcement up
 in that my tender flesh, and you have promised me that he therefore shoul
 night hanged, and yet he liveth, wherefore should I not be sorry? The
 the emperor answered, Be content and pleased, and I shal do Justice
 night upon my Son to morrow: but that I forbore him yesterday, was at
 to walk the moving of one of his Masters by an example. Then said she,
 night, and you forbid to do justice for one word? were it so, yet for a
 and you shoul not let to do justice: and ye say, for the example of
 stand the Master, ye have left it. I fear me it shal happen to you, and
 that with your Masters, as upon a time it fortun'd unto an Emperor
 much with his seven Wise Masters. The Emperor said, I pray you tell
 City that example. She said, To what intent should I labor in vain?
 said, for yesterday I shewed you a good example, and it availed not: and
 and my fatherover I shew for your honor and profit, that the Masters of
 your

your son turn up and down to your destruction, as in this present example I shal clearly show unto you. To whom the emperor said, O my best beloved Lady, tell me that example, that by the same may be the better beware: for though through my clemencie I give you dayes benefit of life to my son, I shal not therefore give him his life: for that which is deferred, is not therefore forgotten. And she said, Gladly shal I show it to you to your profit, and began to tell as it hereafter followeth.

The fourth Example of the Emperors.

Some time there was in the City of Rome seven Wise Masters by whom all the Empire was governed and ruled, and the Emperor that then was, did never attempt any thing without the counsel of the Masters: whereupon they (perceiving that the Emperor was so affected and inclined to them, that without them he would not obtain or do any thing) devised by their art and cunning, that the Emperor should clearly see as long as he was in the palace, but as soon as he was out of the palace, he should become blind, and that did they, to the intent that they might the more freely have the dealing themselves of all things that appertain to the Emperor: by the which they got and won to them great profit and increase of goods: and after they had made and wrought the experiment, they could never change it, nor undo it afterward, but the emperor abode still blind many years. And the seven wise masters made aney proclaimed throughout the empire, that if any man had dreamed or dreamed, he should come unto them with a Florent of gold or silver, and they would expound and declare unto him that interpretation of his dream: whereby, and by other unjust means, they obtained much more substance and money of the people, then the Emperor would do. So upon a time when he sat at the Table with the Emperess, he began to sigh and sorrow in himself: and when she perceived that she inquired diligently of him the cause of his heaviness and dolor. The emperor said, Should it not be heavy and sorrowful unto me, that I so long have been blind, and cannot see out of my palace, and yet have and find no remedy? To whom she spake thus, Emperess, and said, Lord hear my counsel, and it shal never repent you, if you do thereafter. In your Court you have seven wise masters, by whom ye and all the empire is governed, if you now behold and mark this in your mind, ye shal find that they are the cause of your blindness, and disease; and if it be so, they are worthy to die a most shameful death: therefore take heed to my counsel and my advice: first, send for them, and show to them your disease and infirmity, and threaten them on the pain of their lives, that they should find some speedy remedy to help you of your sickness and blindness. This counsel pleased the emperor well. And anon he sent for the Masters, and when they were come, the emperor showed unto them his infirmity and blindness, and charged them on pain of death, that they should presently seek some remedy to cure him thereof. Then answered they, We desire of us a thing that is difficult and hard to be done thus shortly, but give us respite for ten dayes, and then we will give you your full answer. The emperor was there withal well contented and pleased: then the seven wise masters went to counsel, how they may restore unto him his sight again: And in no maner of wise could they find the means how to

away the blindnes from the emperour, wherefore they were all
 the sorrowful, and said among themselves, Without we find a
 remedy, we are all but dead men. So they went from thence
 throughout all the empire, and sought if they could find any re-
 medy or counsell therefore. It happened then upon a time going
 through the City, and in the midst thereof, they found children play-
 ing: And after them came a man with a Talent or talent of gold,
 he said to them, Good Masters, this night have I dreamed a
 dream, the interpretation whereof I would fain know: wherefore
 pray you show me what it signified, and take this gold to you.
 One of them heard one of the children he played among the other: who said
 to him, Give me the gold, and then I shall expound the dream.
 The man said, I have dreamed this night: that in the midst of my
 orchard was a great spring of water, whereof came many small
 windings, that all mine orchard was full, & over-flown with water:
 The child said, Take a spade and dig in the same place whereas your
 fountain ought the water spring out, and there shall ye find a hoord of gold,
 blind great, that you and all your children and lineage shall be for ever
 enriched. The man did as the child had shewed him, and found the
 treasure according to his words. Then went the man to the child,
 and had melted him a pound weight of gold that he had found, for the
 reward of the interpretation of the dream, but he would receive none, but com-
 mended him to the prayers of the man. The seven Wise Masters, when
 they heard the child so wisely expounded his dream, they said to him,
 Good child, what is your name? He answered and said, I am cal-
 led Silver Berlin. Then said the Masters, We see surely great wisdom
 in you, we shall show unto you a strange matter, and of that we
 would gladly that ye could find a remedy. The child said, Show
 unto me your matter. And they said, The emperour of Rome, as
 pressing as he is in the palace, he hath his sight clear without any im-
 perfectment, but as soon as he is gone out of the palace, he is so blind
 that he cannot see. Now if ye can find out the cause thereof, and
 provide the present remedy whereby he may be eased, and have his sight
 out again, ye shall have a great reward and honour of the emperour. Then
 he answered the child, I know as well the cause of the blindness, as
 the remedy. Then said all unto him, Come with us to the emperour,
 for he shall be rewarded so largely, that ye shall be pleased. To
 whom the child said, I am ready to go with you. And when they
 came with the child before the emperour, they said unto him, Lord,
 behold, here is the child that we have brought before you, the which shall
 fulfill your desire touching the cause of your blindness, and the re-
 medy of your sight. The emperour said, Good Masters, will
 you take it upon you, and abide thereby, that the child shall perform
 his attempt? Then all said, yea, for we are expert in his wisdom.
 Then the emperour turned himself towards the child, and said, Shall you
 undertake to tell me the cause of my blindness, & the remedy? The
 child answered and said, My Lord the emperour, lead me into your
 chamber, and there I shall show you, what is to be done: and
 that as he was therein brought, he said to his servants, Take off the
 clothes off the bed and all the apparel, and ye shall see wonders,
 and as that was done, they saw a well smocking that had seven
 windings or floods, the which when the emperour saw, he marvelled
 greatly. The child said, Ye see this well, and without it be quenched,
 ye shall never have your sight. The emperour said, How may that
 be?

He said, But by one way. The emperor said, Show
 them the way, and it is he possible come, if that be done; then
 they shall be able to see it, as well without as within. And
 the child said, Lo, the seven springs of this well, are the
 seven Wise Masters, who hitherto have traitorously governed
 and your empire, and have made you blind as you be without ye
 palace, that they your subjects by extortion, might kill and po-
 son not seeing it. But now they know not the remedy, therefore be
 you now my counsellor, and this well shall be quenched and struck
 off the first matters head, and anon ye shall see I first shall
 quench, and so by other one after another, till that they are all
 quenched, and anon all the springs with the well, shall be vanished
 away. Ye shall have again your sight as you had before: at
 when this was done and fulfilled, the well with the seven springs
 was vanished. And as the emperor had his sight again, he made
 the child a great lord, and gave him great abundance of goods.
 And after spake the emperour, my lord, have ye well perceived ex-
 ample, that I have told you. And he said, Yes, in the den-
 and, I have received a most true and good example. Then said he
 the same manner, Your seven Wise Masters intended to do me
 you, with their false narration, that your son may reign over yo
 empire, which God forbid.

The Declaration of the Example.

This well is your son, wherewith the seven springs, that fig-
 ure the seven Wise Masters, the which son ye may not desire
 without the seven Wise Masters, or make seeds and brought
 nought: that done, this well, that is your son, with all his well
 that not escape, but let him taste his death which betide his dole-
 which are shameful, lest he have a help of his Masters, and ac-
 consequently the seven Masters: and so ye shall govern and gu-
 your empire in rest in peace. The emperor anon commanded
 servants to lead his Son to the gallows, which they were loath
 do. So was there then a great multitude of people gathered to-
 great noise and bewailing, so that the noise came to the ear of
 fourth master named Malquidake, the which leapt upon his horse
 and hasten him to the palace where he meet with his disciples, &
 reverence to him, and commanded him unto him: and when he ca-
 before the emperor, and had done his obeysance and reverence;
 apprehended, the emperor then answered, say I, Little than
 that you have, you old cunning covetise for to ill teaching my Son;
 rememberd you my son well-speaking, and in all things right be-
 fore, but ye have sent him home a fool, dumb, and a rebel, for
 would hath I even with my knife by force, and therefore all ye four
 masters together with him that be hanged. Then said the Master,
 Lord, I have not believed to ill of you; God knoweth why
 Son speaketh not in those time you that perceive other things, b
 the time is not yet come: but in that you say he would have dila-
 ted your wife, that is not truth nor proved, neither for one Ang-
 lican should you make your son to reach: if now for the woman
 said, will you send your Son to die, it shall be most to him, th
 is a certain old man and his wife, and that I shall well prove.
 When the emperor said, I think you do wish me, as sometime
 seven wise men did to an emperor, and therefore said the

he offendet or treispaits of one, or yet of twenty, may not sound to the rebuke and blame of all other: but one thing of a truth I shal shew you, that evil shal come to you, if ye this day put your Son to death for the wordes of your wife, of the which I could shew a notable example. Then said the emperor, Shall ye recte that for my learning? The Waiser said, If ye will call again your Son from earth, then will I rectifie the example, or else not. The emperor commanded that he should be called again, and he desired the Waiser to say, as hereafter followeth.

The Example of the fourth Master.

There was an old Knight and a right wise man, that lived long without wife or child, his friends came to him oftentimes and counselled and exhorted him that he should take a wife. The Knight thus counselled and stirred by his friends so oftentimes, at the last he agreed to them, and they gave him to wife the daughter of the Doyell of Rome, that was rich and of comely grace and feature. Whom when he had seen, anon he was made blind, and when in her love, and began to love her marvelously well, and when they had been married a certain space together, and had no child: Upon a time in a morning it happened that she went to the Church, where she met with her mother, who said, my daughter, how pleath you your marriage, and your husband? She said, Right vile, for you have given to me an old lame man to my discontentment in all respects, and I would ye had the same time buried me, for I had rather lie and eat with a stone, than with him, and therefore I may no longer thus endure, but I must needs love another. Then said her mother, God forbid that, my dear daughter: How long time have I been with your Father, and yet never hitherto have I medled with such foolishness? The daughter said, It is no marvel, for you both met in your youth together, and the one took solace of the other, but I can of him receive no manner of corporal pleasure, for he is old, and on the bed he lieth as still as a stone, or as a thing unmovable. The mother answered, If you love another, tell me what he is? The daughter said, I will love a Priest. To whom the mother said, It were better, and less sin for you to love a Knight or a squire: he said, In short time he would be weary of me, and fier that he would do me shame, and so will not the Priest, for he will hold and keep his own honor and counsel as well as mine: also spiritual men be more true to their lovers than secular men be. The mother said, Hear my counsel, and it will be for your good. Old folk are toly and fall tempt your husband first, and if you scape him without doing you harm, or smirring, then love the Priest. The daughter said, I may not so long abide. The mother said, Upon my telling abide till you have proved. The daughter said, Upon your telling I will abide so long till I have attempted him, but first tell me how I shal prove him? The mother said, Ye hath in his Orchard a tree which he loveth much, cause it to be smitten down while he is out at hunting, and against his coming home make him a fire thereof: and if he forgive it you, then may you surely love the Priest. As he heard that counsel of her mother, she went home to whom her husband said, Where have you been so long? She answered, I have been at the Church, where I met with my mother, and with her I have a little talked and communed, & so began properly to dissemble: After mid-day the Knight rode forth to hunt, then she thinking upon

the counsel of her mother, went to the Gardiner, and said to
 Cut down this young tree newly planted, that I may make
 thereof to warm my Lord whilst at his coming from hunting.
 is a great wind and sharp and cold. The Gardiner said, What
 that I will not do, for my Lord loveth this tree better than he
 all the other trees, nevertheless I shal well help you to gather
 enough for to make a good fire, but in any case this I will not
 do. As she heard that, then boldly she took the axe from
 the Gardiner, and hewed down the tree her self, and made the Gardi-
 ner and others to bear it home. At evening, when her Lord
 from hunting, he was very cold, and he made a great fire,
 burnt and met with him, and set him a stool before the fire to
 him, and as he a little while had sitted, he perceived the odor of
 the tree, and called to him the Gardiner, and said, I feel by this
 that the new plant burneth in the fire. The Gardiner said, Lord
 is true, my lady, your wife hath felled it down. The Knight
 unto her. God forbid that my plant should be cut down by you.
 answered anon, and said, Lord, I have done it, knowing the trees
 cold, and you also cold, and therefore I have ordained this fire for
 comfort. And as the Knight heard that, he looked angry upon
 and said, O cursed woman, how was thou so obdurate, relentless
 and void of pity, as to hew down so gentle a young tree, the which
 thou knowest well that I loved it above all my other trees: and
 he had to say, he began to weep, and excuse her self, and said,
 Lord, I have done it for your good, and do you take it so grievous
 and began to cry, who, who be to me. Anon as the Knight saw
 weeping and tears of his wife, and heard the cause, he was moved
 with pity, and said unto her, Cease off your weeping, and be-
 hold that you do anger me any more, or trouble me in any thing
 that I love. The next day early in the morning he went again
 to the Church-yard, and met with her mother coming home, and re-
 saluted each other. Then the daughter said to her mother, O
 mother, I will love the Priest, for I have attempted my Lord
 you counselled me, but all for naught, for he anon forgave it, but
 he saw me a little weep. Then said the mother, Though old men
 for one time forgive, they double the pain another time, and there-
 fore I counsel you, that you yet once again attempt him. Then said
 the daughter, I may no longer abide, for I suffer so much pain for
 the love of the Priest, that with my tongue I cannot tell it, therefore
 you shal pardon me, I will no more follow, nor be after your coun-
 sel. Then said the mother, For the love that the child should have
 unto the mother, attempt him yet once more for your Fathers dis-
 sence, and then if ye go quickly without any harm or beating, love the
 Priest in the name of God. Then answered the daughter, It is
 me great pain so long time to abide, nevertheless, for the pleasing
 my Father I will once more attempt him, but tell me how I
 begin. The mother said, I understand that he hath a little house
 that he loveth well, and keepeth his hen, call the house with so great
 might before his face against the wall that it be, and if it be
 without a crack, or that he forgive you it lightly, then in the name
 of God love the Priest. Then the daughter said, I will in a
 thing do after your counsel, for there is no daughter living at the
 day, that would more gladly have the blessing of the Father
 than I: and so he bade her mother farewell, and went to his
 house.

The seven Wise Masters.

22

again, and that day with great importunity and trouble of heart, he wrought to the night: and when the night was come, he commanded the bed to be covered with purple and cloth of gold, and the Knight sat by the fire: and when the bed was made thus, the little hound as he was accustomed, hid his head under the bed, and took him by the hinder legs, and with a moan and malicious cry, he ran thus against the wall, that it lay full dead: when the old Knight saw that, he was marvellously angry, and said with a voice to his wife. O thou most cruel and pigmy of all women, how couldst thou find in thine heart to kill that little hound that I loved so much? Lord, said she, have you not hold the hound with his feet (coming out of the mire) betrayed, that is so precious covered with rich cloths? And the old Knight said with much anger, know you not that I loved much my little hound than the bed? When she heard that, anon she was pitiful, to weep, and said, adieu be to me that ever I was for all things that I do for the bed, it is all turned into the mire. The Knight out of the treasure of his goodness and pity, he not suffer the weeping and lamentation of his wife, but for he loved her so well, he said unto her. Cease your weeping, forgive if you altogether: and I counsel you that you beware both you mispraise me from henceforth, and so they went to bed together.

Now the morrow he rose up very early, and went to the Church, where he met with her mother, to whom when she had done reverence as it becometh, she said. Mother, now will I love the world, I have attempted my husband the second time, and all things he suffered. The mother said. O my dear daughter, there is no pity or compassion above the cruelty of god's folks, and therefore I tell you, that you yet once more prove him: to whom the daughter answered. Mother, ye labour in vain, for if you told what, and how I pains I suffer for the world's love, ye should rather help me, if you loved me. The mother said, Dear my daughter this one thing I shall never let you move. I think how you have sucked milk out of breasts, and the great pain that I have suffered for you at your birth, by your pains, my dear daughter, I desire and charge you, you deny not this good petition, and I promise you no more to let you, nor hinder you of your intent, but rather to help you there. She answered the daughter. It is to my great pain to let me, and to forbear my self so long from the love of the world, therefore for the great charge that ye have laid to me, and also for ye have made a bond no more to let me, but to further the will me, I might attempt him, and I shall once more give the adventure. The mother said, I know well that on Sunday next coming, he will to have us all at dinner, and there shall be your father, and all your friends, with all the rest of the city, and when we are set in your place, and all the meats are brought, and covered the table, fasten your keyes privily that hang at your right hand, and then do you feign to have forgotten your key, and say these words openly. But what a hurt will I be of, I have with my knife in my chamber: and then rise up hastily, and go to the door, and say to the maids, you shall run down, and open the door for me: and if ye charge without pain, I make a vow that I shall never let you move. The daughter said, I will

The seven wise Masters.

That gladly he, and so took her leave and departed. The next
 came, and all as the mother said was his. He then made
 and covered the Table, all were set at Table and the waiting
 over again. Her Lord and when the Table was well served
 meats and other things thereto belonging, the Lady of the
 said with a loud voice, See how forgetful I am, I have left
 knife in my coamder, which I must fetch, and to rise up hastily
 by to the cloth with all the meat upon it with her, and all the
 vessels and salt fell upon the ground: the Knight was so wroth
 heart, but he for shame dissembled before the guests, and took
 another clean cloth, and other meats to be brought, and with
 and mirth, he saluted his guests to eat and make good cheer,
 by him they were all made merry. The feast of dinner done
 gave all thanks to the Knight, and took their leave and departed
 man towards his own house. Upon the next day in morning
 Knight rose early and went to the Church, and heard service,
 which he went to a Barber and said unto him; Sir, are you
 in blood-letting, in what vein that I will desire you? He said,
 I am expert in what vein you can name in a mans body. The Knight
 said, I am well content, come with me: and when he was come
 his house he entered into his chamber where his wife lay in bed,
 said unto her, Rise up shortly: then said she, What that I do
 early, it is not yet nine of the clock? The Knight said, You
 rise up, for you must be letten blood of in both your arms: she
 was never letten blood, and that I now bleed: then said the Knight
 That is truth, and therefore you are a fool. Remember ye not
 with ye betwixt down my Tree, and another time ye killed my
 wound, and yesterday you shamed me before all my friends and
 rents: and the fourth is, If that I should suffer you thus to go
 you should for ever confound and shame me. The cause hereof
 consider, that you have evil and toiled blood within your body,
 therefore I will that the corrupt blood shall be drawn out, cha-
 from henceforth shal put me to no more shame and anger: so
 to be made a great fire: and she hood and cried and held up her
 towards heaven, and said, O Lord, forgive my trespasses, and
 pitty upon me at this time, and I will never more offend you.
 Knight said, Pray for me, for the mercy that God
 wrought towards thee at this present, is this: that except thou
 hadst out thine arm straight, I shal soon have thy heart blood: and
 said also to the Barber, Smite hard, and make a deep hole in
 arm, or else I shal give you a great stripe: then smote the Bar-
 ber, that the blood came abundantly out, and the Knight
 not suffer him to stanch it, until the time that he changed her
 in her visage, and this was done, he bade it be stopped, and
 the Barber to smite the vein upon the other arm. Then she cried
 a loud voice, my sweet husband, I pray you have compas-
 upon me, for now I die. The Knight answered, Wife, you
 have thought upon this before, for you had sent to me that
 and compass, or help. Then she held out her left arm, and
 Barber smote therein a great hole, that the blood came out
 thick, and he suffered her to bleed until the time that the color
 was changed, and that she fainted: Then said the Knight
 and bled her arm, and stanch it, and said unto her, Now go
 and study, and think henceforth how ye may amend your life, or

that death the most of your heart. And as this was done, he gave the
Barber his reward and then he went again into the room where the
prince was lying under the hands of her mother who then was led to
her bed; the baird one of her maidens go to her mother in an haste,
and say that I desire her to come speak with me before I die. She mo-
ved when she had heard that, was glad of the correction of her
daughter, and came hither to her. When the daughter heard her
mother, she said. O my sweet mother, I am almost dead, for I
have shed so much blood, that I believe I shall not escape the death.
Then answered the mother, said I not unto you that old men are
right cruel and full? Shall you now love the Devil? She said, the
Devil may the Devil confound and shame. I will never love other
but my husband. Then said the Master to the Emperor, Lord,
have ye understood me? And he answered, Right well, for among
all other that ever I have heard, this was the best example. Three
evil deeds he did unto her husband, and I doubt not, but if she had
done the fourth she would have shamed him for ever. Then said the
Master, Therefore I counsel you that you beware of your wife, lest
it happen worse to you, which appears most manifest in this ex-
ample, if you put to death your only Son for her words, you shall
be deceived in the end, and so for ever ye shall repent it. The Emperor
said, Truly Master this day my Son shall not die. The Master
said, My Lord, I thank you, that ye for mine example and my sake
this day have spared your only Son.

The fifth Complaint of the Empress.

The Empress hearing that the child was not yet dead, forthwith
appeared in her self, and she caused her maids and servants to be in
readiness, as though she would have gone home into her own Coun-
trei to her Father, for to have complained of the great shame
that was done unto her, and yet could have no remedy thereof.
The servants seeing that, went and shewed to the Emperor that the
Empress was going into her Countrey: when he perceived that, he
went to her, saying, whither are you going? I hoped that you
had loved me so much, that in all the world you would have sought
no solace but with me. So that she said, That is true, and there-
fore I go from you, for I had rather hear of your death, than to see
you die: without doubt you delight so much to hear these Masters,
that if that happen to you, as it did to David the Emperor, the
which was so covetous that the noble men of the Empire buried him
quick, and filled his mouth full of molten gold. The Emperor said,
Dear wife, do not so, that another time that blame to you and me
might be laid. Then said the Empress, Truile, Sir, for blame is
yours: for have you not promised me many times that your Son
should live, and yet he liveth? And therefore from henceforth I will
no more believe you. Then said the Emperor, It becometh not a
King every cause lightly to discuss without great advice, and es-
pecially upon his Son, upon whom it is not meet but upon deli-
beration, good counsel, and advisedness to pass judgement, and
therefore I say, and pray you, that you will tell me somewhat by the
which I may govern my life, for it is the better instruction of a
King, without advice and unadvisedly to give judgement. She
go and answered, I will gladly tell you a notable example, to that from
which I am now come.

whereof it will not be tedious or tedious to hear the Parable
and to begin to say this form following.

The fifth Example of the Emperours.

O Emperours the Emperours reigned in Rome right rich and covetous
sons, and above all things he loved Gold: the Citizens of Rome
all that they did much harm and many great outrages to other na-
tions: in so much that divers Nations and Regions were moved
and stirred against the Romans. In that time there was a Wise
Magician, the which excelled in magick, and other sciences, & other
Wizards: the Citizens played him that he by his art and cunning
should make some what by the which they of their enemies might
have warning and knowledge before hand, whereby that they might
provide for themselves the better. He made by his art and cunning
a Tower, and above upon the Tower, did cause to be set as many
Images: as in all the world were Regions and Provinces: and
in the midst of the Tower, he let to be made and set an Image which
held in his hand an apple, or a great round ball of Gold: And the
Image of the Tower held in his hand a little bell and good turning
and looking towards his own Province to him assigned: And as
oftentimes as any Province would stir and rebel against the Ro-
mans: so often turned him to the Image of the Land, and rung the
bell: that hearing, the Citizens of Rome armed themselves, and to
that Province hastened with all their might, the same to subdue: and
so there was no land so great, that could withstand them upon the Ro-
mans, and therefore were they dread and feared over all the world.
Also that Wise Magician made for the solace and comfort of the poor
People, a light that always burned, and by that light he made
two baths, the one of them hot, in the which the poor people might
bath and wash themselves: and the other cold, in the which they
might themselves refresh. Betwixt that light and the baths, he
made an Image standing, in whose face there was weeping, by that
he might see, that anon have vengeance. The Image stood there
many years and at last there came a Clerk, and he beheld the Image,
and read the writing, and thought in himself, what vengeance he
might find thereon: I believe better than if any man should find
thee, and that thou fall: therefore to the earth, he that had some
treasures under thy feet, and therefore in the writing that no man
should have it. And the Clerk left up his hands, and gave the Image
a great stroke that it fell to the ground: and anon the light was out,
and the baths were banished away, and he found no treasure. The
poor folks perceiving that, were all joyful, and said better curses
and blasphemies upon him: that for his singular covetousness had de-
stroyed the Image: and had caused them of so great a solace and
comfort: Yet after assembled three Kings, the which by the Romans
had been oppressed, and suffered great wrongs, and went to take
counsel with them of their Council, how they might be avenged
of the Romans: and some of them said: We will labour in vain, for as
long as there standeth the Tower with the Image, we cannot do
any thing against them.

At the Council arose up four Knights, and said to the Kings,
we have thought on a good remedy, both to that distress of the
poor people, and that wrong done and being about, the which we
cannot do, unless we pledge it that it will be at the cost. When said the Kings,

The seven Wise Masters.

That told that we be at? They answered, and said, that we be at the
 ans of Gold. Then said the Kings, take the Gold, and fulfill
 our promise. The knights took the Gold, and turned toward
 home, and when that they were come thither in the night, without
 of the gates, in the ditch full of water, they drowned one of the
 ans with the gold in it, and another tun they drowned by the second
 gate, and the third tun they drowned by the third gate, and the fourth
 tun they drowned by the fourth gate they drowned: And when they had thus done,
 early in the morning they entered into the City at an hour conveni-
 ent; and as the emperor went over to the Wars, they did him re-
 sistance as it behooved: the emperor seeing them, demanded from
 them, what they were, of what science, and what service they could do:
 and they answered, we are all of far Countries, and sooth sayers
 by our craft, that there is never a thing so private and secret as this, but
 that we shall find it out by our dreams. Some have heard that ye labo-
 red and have pleasure in such things, and therefore we came unto you,
 to know if you had need of our service. The emperor said, I will
 give you, and if it be so that I find you true, you shall have of me
 great rewards and thanks. They said, we ask nothing for our
 words, but the half deal of the Gold, which by us shall be found.
 The emperor said, I am very well content; and thus they had told
 the emperor many words. At night when the emperor was going
 to bed, they said to him, My Lord, if it please you, this night shall
 be chosen of us for his cunning work, and dream, the third day he
 shall show you his dream, and what it signifieth. The emperor
 said, So in Gods name. And they went forth with great gladness,
 and all this night they passed over with great joy and mirth, upon
 such they should come to a good purpose. When the third day was
 come, they went early to the emperor: the first of them said, My
 Lord, please it you to go with us without one of the gates of the
 City, and I shall show where there is a tun full of Gold hid. The
 emperor said, I shall go with you, and see if it be true that you say,
 and when they were come to the place the dream out the tun that they
 found there, had put. The emperor when he saw that, was glad,
 and gave them their part. Then said the second dreamer, My Lord,
 this night shall I dream. When the emperor said, God give you a
 good dream. The next night came, and he took out the other tun, and
 showed it the emperor, and took also his share. In like manner did the
 third, and the fourth: upon the which the emperor took out of all
 treasure weapons and glad, and said, We had not seen heretofore such
 us and expert sooth-sayers, and dreamers, as they were. Then
 went they altogether at once, as it had been out of one mouth: My
 Lord, we have one after another dreamed, the which as ye have seen,
 we be all proven: but now if it please you, that we may dream al-
 together this night, we trust that to us shall be shewed where the
 hid a great quantity and substance of gold and of riches. The em-
 peror said, God give you a good dream, which to me and to you may
 be profitable. On the next morning they came again unto the em-
 peror, and said unto him with countenances full of joy and gladness,
 My Lord, we bring good and profitable tidings, for this night in
 our dreams, such and so great treasure is to us shewed, the which
 you will find it to be true, you shall be so much enriched, that
 this world shall be none like unto you. The emperor said, and where
 shall we find treasure? They said, Under the foundation of the

The seven Wise Masters. As the emperor said, he desired that the Tower with Images should stand upon Gold, that the emperor might be defended, and that he should be able to destroy the Tower with Images. And he said to them, my Lord, have you found us in our ing, other than true and right? The emperor said, Nay, I would have the people with our own hands that give out the Tower at purchasing the Tower of the Images. And it is expedient that secretly in the night by us it be done, for dread of the people, lest that it should run in the nose and mors of them, and also that they should not take the good Gold from you and us. The emperor said, Go in the Name of God, and do your best as you will or can, and I shall to morrow come to you. Then went they with joy and gladness, and in the night they were set into the Tower, and then with great haste and diligence they undermined it, and on the next day, early in the morning, they mounted upon their horses, and rode again towards their own Country with great joy and glory. And ere it came without the sight of Rome, the Tower fell down on the morning ensuing. When it was fallen, and the Senators it perceived they sorrowed greatly, and there was a great bewailing throughout all the City, and they went unto the emperor, and said, How may it be that this Tower is thus fallen, by the which we have always had warning afore of our enemies? He answered, and said, To me came four false deceivers, and feigned themselves to be soothsayers, and that they could find treasure in the ground; they said, That under the foundation of the tower was hid an innumerable sum of gold, the which they should undermine with hurting of the tower of Images; and I gave faith to them, and they have deceived me. They answered him, We have coveted so much Gold, that for your unsatiate covetousness we shall all be destroyed, but first your covetousness shall fall upon your self; they took him to the Capitol, and laid him on his back, and poured a quantity full of molten Gold, saying to him, You have desired Gold, and therefore you shall drink Gold; and after they buried him quickly. So long after that came the enemy against the Romans, and they came and destroyed them all. Then said the emperor unto the seven Wise Masters, Have ye, my Lord, this example well understood? And they said, Right well. Then, said he, The Tower with Images is your Body with five wits: As long as you do live, there is none that can trouble or make war upon you, nor upon your people; but when you shall be dead, with the seven Wise Masters, with their false narrations of fables, which they say they may destroy you, for you are over much covetous to hear and incline to them, in so much that they shall undermine you, and cast you under foot, and bring you to nought. The Images are your five wits, that be all as much as you be so childish and foolish, they shall deceive you, and your Son shall obtain your empire. The emperor said, We have recited to me a good example, which I shall not happen to me as it did with the Tower, but my Son shall see the day that shall taste the bitterness of death, to whom the emperor said, We will do so, you shall speed well, and live long. Upon the next day he commanded him to be led to hanging; and as he was led to the gallows, came riding against him upon an horse, with his Father, towards the Palace, and came before the emperor,

ted him with all reverence: but he despised his salutation, and
 said in fear of his life: And the Father said unto the Emperor
 Lord, I have not deserved to die: and for to despise my salu-
 tion: it is not for your honor: for your Son hath not with us been
 in such condition as ye repute him, as ye in short time shall find: and
 he speakeh not, it is of his great wisdom, and knoweth that he
 will speak as his time cometh, though that he now speaketh
 in your time shall hear. But forasmuch as that he would have
 made your wife, that believe not, for to tell a man as he is, would
 be attempt to shameful a deed: and if you put him to death for your
 words, ye shall not escape without shame and vengeance like as
 of Croesus escaped not without vengeance for the death of: Gallienus
 his cousin. The emperor said, That would I faine hear and under-
 stand. Then said the Father: What would it avail me to tell you
 a narration for your profit, if in the mean time your Son shall die
 hereof: If ye will call again your Son: it shall be discovered at
 his pleasure, and after do as you think best. The emperor had
 again his Son, and let him in prison, and then began the Pa-
 ter to tell on this manner, as hereafter followeth.

The Example of the fifth Master.

Sometimes there was a famous Physician named Hippocras right
 cunning, the which excelled all other in learning and sciences: he
 had with him his nephew or kinsman, that was called Gallienus: the
 which he loved so much. This Gallienus was of an excellent wit and
 studied all his mind to learn of his Uncle the science of physick.
 When Hippocras perceived that, inasmuch as he could, he hid from
 him his cunning, fearing that he should excel him in that knowledge
 the great wit that he was of. As Gallienus saw this, he studied
 to excel him in such that in short time he had perfect cunning in
 physick for the which Hippocras envied him much. It happened ap-
 pears a time thereafter, The King of Hungary sent his messenger un-
 der Hippocras, that he should come unto him for to cure his Son. Hip-
 pocras excused himself, and would not go, but sent his cousin Gal-
 lienus with his letters of excuse for his not coming. And when Gal-
 lienus was come before the King, he was right worshipfullie received, &
 he marvelled why that Hippocras would not come. He excused him,
 saying, That he had many other things to do: and he might not
 come, but he hath sent me in his stead, and with the help of God I
 will make whole the child: that pleased verie well the King. Gallienus
 came to the child, and when he had seen his urine, and touched his
 pulse, he said to the King: Excellent Prince: I pray you hear
 my words, and tell me who is the father of this child?
 The King said, who should be his father but my Lord, the King? Gal-
 lienus said, I am sure he is not the father. She answered, If you
 will say that for a truth, I shall cause your head to be smote off. He
 answered, I say once again, that this King is not the father, and I
 will not therefore bid him to lose my head, for I have not deserved
 such reward and so was going his way. The Queen spake, O
 my Father Gallienus, if ye will keep it secret, and not discover my
 child's name, and open unto you my heart. The Father said, I
 send that from me, that I do any person's death, and there-
 fore I would not, that it should be told to me, for it shall never pass my
 lips, and afterwards I shall call and make your Son whole. The
 King said, I will keep it secret, and not discover my child's name, and open unto you my heart.

The seven Wise Masters.

31

And consider ye not, that ye have after the first tyme
 answered that ye have of any of them such a Son, that shall keep and
 save you from death. The emperor said, I will be that for me
 when said the Father, then do ye that which both becomes the
 wisdom of your years, and the royaltie of your Nation, and I com-
 mend you to God, and I thank you that you have this day for me
 redeemed your Son. The emperor said, I mark this well, that the
 Father was craftie and subtil, therefore I will not for you, nor for the
 Son, I have him.

The sixth Complaint of the Empress.

When as the Emperors had knowledge thereof, she bewailed her self
 so sorrowful and impatient a body, that all that saw her of heavie
 countenance, and said to the Emperor, Your wife the pinner away
 herself as though she would herself die. The emperor hearing there-
 of, went to her and said, Wherefore (good Lady) be ye so impatient?
 she answered, saying, O Lord, how should I hold it in, when I am
 the only daughter of a King and your wife, and in your company I
 live, yet have a great despite and shame, and continuallie you have prom-
 ised me to punish him, but yet you perform it not. The emperor said,
 what not what I shall do: ye labor from day to day to have my Son
 put to death, and the Fathers labor to save his life: and amongst all
 this, know well that he is my Son, but where the truth is, that I
 know not. Then said she, This is the cause whereof I complain that
 ye believe the Fathers more than ye do me, and therefore it shall hap-
 pen to you, as it did to a King with his Steward.
 Then said the emperess, Tell me that example, peradventure it
 may move me the sooner to put my Son to death. She said, O Sir,
 I pray you give attention to what I shall say, and began to
 tell, as hereafter ensueth.

The fifth Example of the Empress.

Here was a King most proud and deformed in his visage, in such
 a way, that all women hated him. This King thought to be more
 than all Kings, and to take and carry away the bodies of Peter and Paul,
 who while he was in this mind, called to him his Steward that was
 his secret, with him of his Privy Council, and said to him, Go and
 seek a fair woman, that this night may sleep with me. The Ste-
 ward answered, My Lord, ye know well your infirmities and ugliness,
 and that no woman will do this without a great sum of money. The
 King said, Think you that for my money I will want one? Have I
 not Gold and Silver enough? though it were a thousand Florents,
 I would be glad to give. The Steward hearing that, was anon con-
 sidered with covetousness, and went to his own wife, which was right fair
 and had child, and of good kindred, and said to her, O my good wife,
 my Lord desireth and coveteth for to sleep with a fair and beautiful
 woman, and will not forbear it, though that he would ask of him a
 thousand Florents, and hath commanded me to provide him one;
 and therefore I counsel you, that ye to us get that money. The wife
 said, Where is it that the King were not so proud & so full of shame,
 that would I were to that end content, for the King against God. The
 Steward said, I counsel a woman you, and promise you, that with
 that you consent to my device, you shall never hereafter have need of
 any more.

The seven Wise Masters

26

and the King hearing that, he said, I am much more for fear of the
consequence unto him.

The steward then went to the King, and said, Sir, I have found the
not a fair woman, and she is comely of a very good house, whith woman is
not less than a thousand florents: and in the evening she shall be
come, and early in the morning she shall away, that she be not
of the people. The King answered and said, I am well contented
When the night was come, the steward led his wife to the Kings chamber,
and made fast the doore, and so went his way: early in the morning
the steward arose, and went to the King, and said, My Lord, it is
be day within a while, it is good that you perform your promise, and let
let the woman go: The King said, this woman pleaseth me to have
that so soon she shall not depart from me. When he heard that he was
parced thence all soyle, and carried but a while: and came to the King
King again, and said, My Lord, the morning is come, therefore
the woman go as I have promised her, lest she be ashamed. The King
said, Per shall she not go from me, and therefore go out and shut
doore again. The steward right sorrowful departed, and went
and down with an angel and heavie heart, till that the fair and cleare
day appeared, and then he entered again into the Chamber,
said, My Lord, It is clear day, suffer the woman to depart, she
be not therewith ashamed. The King answered, I say so you say to
a truth she shall not yet depart, for her company is to me right
king and acceptable. The steward hearing that could not longer
bear to hold his own counsel, but said to the King, O my good
gracious Lord, I beseech you suffer her to depart, for it is mine
wife. The King hearing that, said to him, Open the window: and
when it was open, the fair and bright day appeared, and he beheld
the woman right faire and goodly, and perceived that it was the
of the steward, and said to him; O thou slaw to man-kind, when I
came to thy creation: why had thou for so little money, married
and done thy sale and good wife, and had delivered her unto me
thing: Therefore haste thee and get thee gone out of my Realm, and
never more hereafter come in my sight: for from henceforth if ever
may see thee thou shalt die the most shameful and horrible death
ever can be imagined. When the steward heard that, he fled his
and durst not abide, and was never so hardy any more to come
the Realm. And the King kept that wife all his life time in great
honour, and gave to her plenty of all things that to her behooved
appertained.

After that, the King caused to be gathered and assembled a great
and mighty Armie of puissant men of war, and so he went to the
City of Rome with great might, and besieged the City on all sides
so long, until the Romans would have delivered to him: (for to have
departed and withdrawn himself from thence) the Bodies of the
holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

Then there was in the City seven Wise Masters as ye have
by the counsel of whom all the City was guided and governed: And
the Citizens came to them and said, What shall we now do? It
hath us I be gone unto our deadly enemies the bodies of the
Apostles: or else the City. Then answered the first Master, I have
my wisdom and cunning this day save the City, & the Bodies
of the Apostles. And so every one of them for one day promised to
the City, and so your Masters have promised your

say that the King began to assault the City on all parts. When he had
 said this, the Water to say, and to alledge to wisely, for so he had
 thought the King that day left his assault, and withdrew himself a little
 from the City, and so did all the Waters, no one after another, till
 the seventh. Thus, whom came the burgesses of the City, and said, O
 our fathers, ye shall understand, that the King hath made his oath and
 covenant, that to morrow in all his puissance and strength, he will have
 assault upon the City, or else we must be all in jeopardy to lose our lives.
 Some therefore in acquitting your promise, defend and keep us from danger,
 as we have your fellows before you had done. Then answered the Water,
 and said, Be of good comfort, and fear not, for to morrow I shall be
 so busy running, both such a work and operation, that the King and
 he will his puissance and might shall flee away and leave the fight. The
 next day the King made and gave a great assault to the City: then
 went the Water and clothed himself in a marvellous strange behure
 having therein the feathers or tails of Hawks and of other fowls of
 divers colors, and took two bright swords, in each hand one, and
 went thence therewith, and stood upon the highest Tower of all the City,
 and began to move and turn, and both himself about on all parts to-
 wards the host, so that they might all behold and see him: and he
 held in his mouth the two bright swords, that marvellously shined:
 when they without the Kings host beholding that, said unto him, O King,
 behold upon the highest of yonder Towers a wonderful thing. Pea-
 ces be with thee, I see it right well: it is marvellous, but what it is, I
 know not. They say, it is the God of Christian folk, that is come
 out of heaven to slay and destroy us with his two swords, if we any
 longer abide. The King hearing that, trembled for fear, and said,
 behold that that we do: There is but one way, and that is, that we anon
 depart from hence, lest that their God avenge himself on us.
 Then began the King with all his host to flee: notwithstanding there
 was no need, but that they of the Water were beguiled and deceived:
 and when the Romans saw that they had thus pursued after, armed in
 good ordinance: and the King, with many of his people, they killed
 and destroyed, and in that manner by great subtilty of the Waters,
 was the mighty King with his army subdued. Then said the Em-
 perour to the Emperor, Lord, ye have understood what I have said:
 and he said, Pra, very well, with good attention. He said, Now ye
 have heard what I have said unto you, at the beginning of this narra-
 tion of the stewards: that the King trusted so much to the covetous-
 ness of Gold, that he shamed his own wife, and he for that was driven and
 banished out of the Land. In like manner, your Son, for the desire
 of gold and appetite that he had to the Empire, intendeth to confound and de-
 stroy you, but whilst you be in your might and power, do with him as
 the King did to the stewards: If you will not put him to death, then
 thrust him out of your Empire, that ye may without fear live in safety
 and guard of your life. And have you not also heard how the King lay
 siege to the City of Rome: and how he was by the wise Waters de-
 feated and scorned, and that he with his followers were killed and
 slain? In the same manner the seven wise Waters intend to de-
 stroy you, and with crafty wiles and subtilties, to deceive you, and in
 the end traitorously to murder you, that so your Son might reign
 sole Governor of your Empire. Whereupon answered the Em-
 perour, and said, That shall not be so, for to morrow my Son shall be
 commanded his servants that with him they shall go, and he

When the Emperour had heard these things, he gathered his council together in great troops, and lamenting the death of the Emperours Son. And so soon as the Emperour had heard thereof he bade him to the Emperours Court, where he was in great reverence: but he took all things very disdainfully, and he heard him that he should be put to death with his Son, for that he took with them made him, and a treason, which he should commit his wife. The Master said, I have not deferred the death of your Son, but to have great and large gifts: for he is so young, as you shall hear within three days, and if he may live so long: but if you put him to death for the words of your wife, then shall I marvel at your wisdom: and without doubt it shall happen to you, as sometimes it happened to a Knight that so much allowed the saying of his wife, that he was bound to an horse east, and was through all the way to the Gallows. The Emperour said, For the love of God, show me that example, that I may the better believe that well. That I will not do, said the Master, without you do it first again your Son. Then he commanded to call back his Son, and the Master began as followeth.

The Example of the sixth Master.

Sometimes there was an Emperour of Rome which had three knights whom he loved above all others. In the same City there was an ancient Knight that loved a fair young wife, which above all other things he loved, as you do the Emperours: the Lady could sing right well and melodiously, and with such sweetness that many hearts were drawn to her, and desired her company. It chanced on a season, as she sat in her house, her visage turned into the street, that she might see them that were passing by, and began sweetly to sing, that all folk delighted in her melody. By chance came a way a Knight of the Emperours Court, that heard her voice and beholding her with a longing mind, and at length he was exceedingly taken in her love: and then entering into her house, fell into communication and talk with her greatly, but chiefly of love: and amongst all other talk he demanded of her what he should give unto her to sleep by her side one night. She answered him, One hundred Florents; then said the Knight, Well, when I shall come, and I shall give you an hundred Florents. She said, Knight, quoth she, when I have convenient time I shall send for you, and you. The next day she sung again in the same place, and it chanced the second Knight of the Emperours Court to come by that same way, which likewise was taken in her love: he also promised her an hundred Florents: to whom also he promised her, an hundred Florents, to whom also she promised to show him a time provided. The third day also there came to her a Knight, and he in like manner was taken in her love: to him likewise she consented, and he promised her an hundred Florents, if that she would but give him knowledge of the time, which she also promised. These three Knights having thus secretly spoken to the Lady, that not one of them had any knowledge of another coming unto her. Now the Lady that was thus malicious, covetous and deceitful, came to her husband and said, Sir, I have a better matter to show unto you, which if you will follow my counsel, you shall be rich and powerful, you may largely relieve. Then the Knight replied, Well to me, and I will keep it as secret as my life, and I will do it to the uttermost of my power. She answered him thus, Knight.

Knight

The eight of the Emperours Court have been with me of late; and
 each knight has offered an hundred florents: And by the charge
 of an hundred florents get him no man hath knowledge thereof, should it
 be to us great help: but poverty be well relieved: Then said
 the knight, forsooth, yes, and therefore whatsoever you shall counsel
 me to do, I shall most willingly perform: then said she, I have be-
 lieved you counsel, that when these knights shall come with their flo-
 rents, you shall stand behind the gate, with your sword drawn in your
 hand; and as they come (being that they come one after another) you
 shall slay them, and so we shall have those three hundred florents: that
 they bring without any mans knowledge thereof. The knight an-
 swered, O my best beloved wife, I fear that this evil cannot be hid,
 and then we should therefore suffer death, that it were known. She
 answered and said, I shall this work begin, and I shall thereof make
 what good end, and fear it not. When the knight saw that she was in
 earnest, it caused him to be the more bold; then he sent for the first
 knight, and he came to her anon without any tarrying to the gate,
 and knocked, and she asked if he had brought the hundred florents.
 He answered and said, yea, I have brought them with me. Then she
 opened him in, and he had no sooner entered, but that her husband mur-
 dered him. Immediately after came the second knight, and in like
 manner was slain. And not long after that came the third knight,
 whom he also slew, and having finished the Butcher, they covered
 right their murdered bodies into a secret Chamber fit for that purpose.
 And when they had thus done, the knight said unto the Lady, O dear
 wife, if that these dead bodies should be found with us, we shall live
 the most shameful death that can be imagined: for it is not possible but
 that these three knights will be missed in the Emperours Court, and
 Courtiers search and inquisition will be made for them through all this
 city, where they are become. She answered, and said, But knights
 being now this work begun, I will therefore make a good and se-
 cret end, as I have said before. This lady had a brother, the which was
 of the whole government of the wealth of the City, that on the market
 he watched in the streets with his fellows; he stood at her gate, and
 well might he come to her brother, and said unto him, O my best beloved
 brother, I have a secret matter the which I would make known unto
 you, and therefore come in with me, and I will relate it unto you.
 And when that he was entered into the house, the Lady received him
 very kindly, and gave him wine to drink, and said, my beloved brother,
 herewith is the cause that I have called you, for I have much need of
 your counsel. The brother answered, and said, Speak it boldly to me.
 She said, O whatsoever I may do to my power, that shall be at your ser-
 vice without letting, then said she unto him, yesterday came a knight
 being good friend to us, but after wards he fell into such foolishness, and
 gave me my husband, that he slew him, and he lyeth here in our house
 being dead; now my dear brother we have no man, we may not trust in
 any man, but you, O if the dead body be found in our house, we shall be
 made to death. Now he made mention but of one, her brother said
 unto her, deliver him unto me in a sack, and I shall bear him to the
 market, and he being there, we shall glad thereof, I delivered unto my
 brother the body of the first knight he took it, and went withal a good word
 to him, and said therein. As soon as this was done, he came again unto
 the sister, and said unto her, Give me now of the best wine, for you are
 knight.

The Seven Wise Masters.

of him quit. And he gave him thanks, and went unto her Chamber, as though he had gone for wine: & began to cry out with a loud voice. The knight that was cast into the sea, is come again. And when she heard that, he wondrously, and said, O he me him, that he if he will rather again, and took the body of the second knight (supposing that it had been the body of the first knight) & went to the sea, and with a great stone he drowned him therein. And when he went again to his sisters house, and said, now fill me a cup of wine: for I have drowned him so deep, & he shall never come again. Then said she, thanks be to God, and went again to her Chamber, and fetched her a fetchwine, and cried with a loud voice, alas, where be to me, he is risen again, and come out of the sea. And as her brother heard that, with a great marvel said, what devil is this knight, that I have cast into the water, and yet notwithstanding he is come again? Deliver him me the third time, and I shall see if he will come again. Then he gave to him the third knight which he did before: for the first had been the first, and went without the city to a great forest, and made a great fire to cast the knight therein: and when he was almost burnt, the brother went thence a little distance to do his need. When came there a knight that was to ride to the city, wherein they residing they should have a Courney and Justice: and it was cold weather, and dark, and he was not far from the city: and when he saw the light of the fire, he drew thereto, and lighted from his horse, and watched him. The watchman came and said to him, what art thou? The knight said, I am a gentle knight. Then spake he wondrously, and said, thou art no knight, but a devil, for I first cast thee into the water, & second time with a great stone I drowned thee, and the third time I have put thee in this fire, supposing thou hadst been burnt, and yet thou standest here: and then he took the knight with his horse and cast them both into the fire. After that he went again into his sister, and told what had happened to him, and said, I have drunk of the best wine, for after I had burnt him, I found him come again: for the fire with a horse, and I have cast them both into the fire, and he is alive: for his sister perceived well, & he had burnt a knight of the house, who anon brought him of the wine abundantly: & after he had well drunken, he went thence. Not long time after, there fell a great storm and contention between the knight and his wife, insomuch that he smote her, so that she had indignation thereof, and was wondrous angry, and said, that many might hear, O wretch, wilt thou kill me, as thou hast done the three knights of the Emperor? Certain was he a braggart, that this hands on them, and brought them before the emperor. And the woman confessed that her husband had slain the three knights of the emperor: and how he took from them three hundred marks. And it was that the truth found both were guilty at a horse race, and hanged upon the gallows. Then said the Emperor to the knight, what you have said, what I have said: he answered, I have said well: I say for certain, that wife was I, woe woman, that I have done it all women, for then he would not have let me go to marry him, and after he had destroyed him. The Emperor answered and said, I without doubt it had happen unto you, had I not put your soul into the hands of the devil of your wife. The emperor said, O wretch, thou art a knave. The knight hearing that, gave thanks to the Emperor, and rode home, and with his wife.

The seventh Complaint of the Empress.

When the Empress heard that the Son of the Emperor was yet living, as a mad woman she ran to the Emperor, weeping and crying, saying, Oh unhappy woman, Alas, what shall I do? For this day my life that am so married, and no punishment doth upon me. The emperor answered, She desired that you should stand on such a wicked deed: but suffer a while, and you shall see the good end of your cause. She answered, Sir, the end that he speaketh of that shall follow to you and me a great confusion. The emperor said, Fear off such talk. She said, Lord it shall come to you and your Son, as it happened unto a King and to his Son. I pray you tell me that example. She said, I will gladly tell it, but I fear that you will hear me no more: for the next day the seventh countess that speaketh, and save your Son from the death, as the other six of his fellows have done, and the next day after that, your Son shall speak of those words you shall have and take such joy and consolation, that the love betwixt us shall be wholly forgotten and taken away. The emperor said, That is impossible to be, for I shall in the next forget your love.

Then said she, O my best beloved Lord, if it please you, I will tell you one example, by the which you shall beware before of many evils to come, and especially of your accursed Son, who intendeth to destroy me by his Fathers. The emperor said, Tell on your example. And the empress began to tell of this, as hereafter followeth.

The seventh Example of the Empress.

There was sometime a King which loved his wife above all things, and was so much enamoured that he loved her in a strong Castle, and he bare the Monkeys of the Court himself. The Lady was therefore right happy and comfortable. Now in far Countries there was a valiant Knight, he had been on a time lying on his bed dreamed after this manner, We of us thought perfectly that he saw one of the fairest creatures that ever man's eyes might behold, whose love above all other women he desired to be obtained; and if that he might see her walking, he should certainly find out some knowledge of her, by which towards him great friendship would be had and honor bestowed. So the queen the same night by vision of the King's dream, the like was also brightly dreamed, and as yet they knew not one any knowledge of each other, neither of name nor yet of the same. When the Knight saw this dream, and seen (as he thought) the most delicious and comely Lady in his life, he then determined in his mind, that his foot should take no rest, until the time that he should find out the Lady & to him in his dream seemed so glorious. He then having taken his horse and with him all that was necessary for his journey, he then travelled throughout divers Regions, Countreys, and Kingdoms, so long, until at last he came into the same place, and where the aforesaid queen was by her father's commandment shut up, and kept in a strong Castle. And now this said Knight was told that he was come into the said City, and having for a certain season there, he then perceived it to fall out, that upon a day he should walk in the park, and he was not as then that the queen was there, but he was at that time sitting in a garden, and when he saw the people walking by, and amongst others, he espied the Knight that before

The seven Wife Masters.

The Duke of Burgundy knew him to be the same man, of whom the heretofore
 was told before, and the Knight by chance lifted up his eyes, and saw him
 within the Lady sitting in the window, and when his mind gave him
 that it was he of whom he had dreamed, and he began to sing a song
 of love. And as he heard that he was then taken with her love, and
 he came from thenceforth daily went and walked about the Castle
 beholding it all over, to see that if any manner of way he might come
 in to declare the secret of his mind unto her. Then the Lady perceived
 that she presently invited a letter, and secretly conveyed it out
 from the casement of her Chamber window. And when he had not
 perceived her letter, and understanding the will of the Lady, he
 thought any delay began to daunt Jests and Turnaments, and he
 did perform so many great and marvellous deeds that the fame of his
 came to the ears of the King. And as soon as the King heard thereof
 he sent after him, and said unto him. Sir Knight, I have heard
 that you have got much honour at our Jests and Turnaments, and
 therefore if it will please you to abide here, and dwell with us, I will
 that give you large gifts, and rewards. The Knight answered and
 said. O right mighty Prince, I am your servant, would so soon be
 I could as any service I might be pleasing unto your magnificence
 without taking of any reward, save one thing before all other. I wish
 her. The King said unto him. Show it unto me before what thing
 that is. The Knight answered, My Lord, seeing that it hath pleased
 your most excellent Majesty for to take me for your servant, and
 of your most grave Council, it hath seemed unto me to be most
 prudent for both our delights, that I had a place nigh unto the
 of the Castle that I at all times might be the more ready at your
 calling, when you have need. The king answered and said, I com-
 mend unto you, make it as you shall think best. Then the King com-
 manded many good men to be brought before him: having to do, he
 chooseth out certain men fit for his purpose, and caused them to build
 a late lodging near to the walls of the castle, and all the being
 finished, he made a covenant with one of the workmen (whom he
 thought fittest for that purpose) to make out of his hands a secret
 to the queens lodging. And when this was finished according to his
 desire, he then killed the workman, because he should not make
 known unto any. And having thus done, he then went in unto the
 queen, and did her reverence, for it was become his to do: and
 they discoursed of many matters: and having thus passed away the
 day, and the night drawn on, he then desired that he might sleep
 for one night, but the often times did deny him, and yet nevertheless
 he continued unto his request. And now they having spent the night
 to their pleasures, and the morning being come, the knight then
 began to be alone lodging. And the queen began to think with
 her, and said, What shall I do? If I should make the King my
 acquaintance herewith, there would too costs come thereof, and
 one is my shame, and that peradventure he should utterly forsake
 me, and cause me be driven out of this land for ever: the other is, that
 I should lose the knight, for from death it was not possible for him
 to live, and therefore I think it to be most expedient for me to be
 with him, than for to reveal it unto any. After that the knight
 was taken as it pleased him, went in unto the queen, and did
 her reverence, and he gave her a ring, the which the king had
 given him at his wedding. The knight was so famous, and had
 many

the best of his knowledge in Iudany, that in every battell and tourname-
nt he had the victory; for which cause he was held in great estimation
and favour with the King, so that he made him his knight and com-
panion since all his Region and Land. It happened upon a day that the
King was disposed to ride on hunting, wherefore he commanded his
Chamberlaine to make him ready on the morrow for to go forth; where-
unto he offered himself most willingly. And upon the morrow after
he was entered into the forest, and all the day they chased and followed
the wild beasts, that they were so weary grown, that the King did
him sit down by a fountain to rest him, and the Knight by his side, and
the Knight was no longer set, but he fell a sleep by the King, having
laid his ring upon his finger which the queen had given him; which the
King perceiving and marking, did know it right well. How when
the Knight waked, and perceiving that the King looked, and per-
ceiving that the King had seen the ring, then he feigned himself to
be sore sick, and said unto him, My honoured Lord, I feel my self sore
sick, that if I do not, by all speed I may, haue me unto my lodging,
and there seek out some present remedy, either by means of physick,
or by some other course, else I am but a dead man; and therefore I
cease now you to give me leave to go home. Unto whom the King made
him this answer and said, Go my dear friend, in the Name of God, and
take that there be nothing wanting that may procure thy health, what
my Court or Kingdom can afford. The King had no sooner
ended his speech, but immediately the knight took his leave of him,
and getting upon his horse, he then hastened into his house: and as
soon as he was come home, he presently alighted, and hastened him to
the queens lodging, and gave her the ring again: and he told her
withal, how that the King had espied it upon his finger, when they
were both weary and laid down to rest: and withal he told her, that
he had feigned himself to be sore sick, for which cause the King gave
him leave to go to rest, and to his lodging: he also prayed her, that
if the King at any time should call for the ring, that immediately she
should shew it unto him. This done, he took his leave of the queen,
and went down again to his lodging. And not long after that, the
King came unto the queen, and the queen received him right loving-
ly, and after that a little time was passed, the King said unto her, My
honoured Lady, shew me where the ring is that I gave to you, for
I have a great desire to see it. She answered and said, O my dear
Lord, to what intent at this time do you desire to see it? To what
end? If you shew it not to me incontinently, it shall repent you.
Then she arose up and went unto her chest, and took the ring out of
it: and having thus done, she shewed it to the king her husband: and
when he had seen it, he then was half ashamed, and said unto her,
O my beloved queen, O how like is the knights ring, unto this
your ring, which I saw upon his finger: for I belike it had been
mine, and therefore that was the cause why I did ask to borrow it
of you for it. And now of this evil suspicion I victo my self, and
forgive you, my dear Lady, in this behalf, for the firmness of the love
which I have to you: for I thought none could get therein, but I am
now convinced, in regard that no man hath the keeping of the keys but you
only. She said unto him, My dear Lord, wonder not, for the ring
may be like another, and many men do commonly make the like
of these, but there are others that make the same, but then for the
stone that you have in it, I pray you, for you know, the stones of the
world, and the keys you have always in your pocket, and with these

man there with. After that the knight expiated a great dinner
 and then came the king, his Sovereign Lady, and so, that they had a
 table set before them from out of my country, to feed the, for which
 I had ordered a dinner to be made; therefore I would desire you
 your desire, that you would desire that house, as to dine with me
 in my house this day, and to take such meat, as shall be there provided
 for the king, and for the queen, and for the knights, and for the ladies.
 The knight was glad thereof, and then by his secret
 way he went unto the queen, and said unto her, my beloved
 lady, you must do this, you shall come to my house, the privy way, and
 you shall clothe your self in rich clothing, and deck your self with jewels
 and other ornaments according to the manner and custom of my
 country, and then shall you sit at the table with my lady, as well as
 my Sovereign Lady, and make him good cheer. She replied unto him
 after this manner: Sir knight, I shall be ready to do all things as my
 lord commandeth me. And when the time appointed was near, the
 king and that king was coming from the Castle towards the knights
 house, in the mean time, by the secret way, the queen did enter into
 the knights lodging (before that the king could come thither) and
 apparelled her self after the manner of the knights country. And
 when the king was entered into the house, she meeting him with
 courtesy salutations, received him. And when the king had beheld
 her, he demanded of the knight, what woman she should be, that
 seemed unto him so fair? Then answered the knight and said, My
 Sovereign Lady, it is my Sovereign Lady, that now even for the love
 that she beareth me, is come out of my country after me, to know
 wherefore I should absent my self so long, both from her love and
 service. Now their speech being ended, the knight caused the king
 to sit down at the table, and made the queen to sit by him, and the
 king thought that it was his queen, and laid within himself, O how
 like is this woman unto my wife? So the strength of the tower still
 deceived him, that he gave more faith and credence unto the knights
 words, than he did his own eyes. The queen began to speak, and
 said to the king, and to sit him to eat and drink, and make good
 cheer. And as the king heard that voice, then he said unto himself,
 O blessed Lord, how like is this woman to my queen in her behav-
 ior, speech, visage, and in all other things and conditions. And still
 the strength of the tower deceived him. In the end of the feast, the
 knight played his beloved Lady to sing a song before the king, and
 she began to sing a song of love. When the king had heard her, he
 knew her voice, and thought unto himself, Is not this my wife?
 And yet how can this be she? I having the keys of the tower in keep-
 ing. And so all the time of dinner the king sat striving and debat-
 ing thus within himself. But dinner being ended, he willed the
 knight, that forthwith he would take up the table, he having some
 urgent occasions. I moved him thereunto, for he was in great thought,
 and was troubled in his mind. And thereupon the knight answered,
 and said, My Lord, what is the reason you are so melancholy and
 sad? What is it that discontenteth you? Be not much troubled in
 your mind, and if you please, we shall make you some pleasant sport,
 and merriment. And the gentle woman said, My beloved Lord, if it
 please you, we will as to abide, we shall make you all the pleasure and
 delight that this place can afford in such sort, that if your queen
 were here, she could not give you more content. And thereupon

The seven Wise Masters.

thing began to be very angry, and said unto him, I have been
 by day labo- for I may no longer here abide, until that I have found
 my mind. When the knight obeyed the commandment of the king,
 and instantly took up the table, glowing thanks unto him, but he
 especially unto the king his most Sovereign Lord and Father, who
 when the king he departed from the knights house and went with all haste
 in that might be unto the Castle, intending to see whether the queen
 had passed her in or not. But in that mean time the queen went in at her
 private door: and as soon as she came therein, she brought off her un-
 common attire, and then put her self in the same habit which the
 king did leave her in. The king entering, he found the queen in
 of the same clothing that he had left her in before, and seeing all things
 as well out contrary to his expectation, he then did embrace, and most
 lovingly kissed her, and said unto her, This day have I eaten with
 as my knight, and with his beloved Lady, who hath come out of her
 countrey, unto this my Court to find him out, who being together
 might meet and overcome loved in the sight of her, did presently ordain a
 great feast to be provided, and humbly did intreat me to do him so
 much grace, as that I would accompany him at his feast withererso-
 ever. And I answered, that for the love I did bear him, I would go with
 him: and much more, if he would request me: whom I have beheld,
 when he seemed unto me to fail, that since I was born, unto this day,
 that mine eyes have not seen in all the world, one so like as he is to you.
 Somewhat that all the dinner time I was so much troubled in many
 low matters, that I could hardly endure to the end of the feast, but that
 anon incontinently I must come home to see whether you were here or
 not. Then the queen answered, and said unto him, O mighty king,
 wherefore do you so much mistrust me, having so often times found
 me to the contrary? Do you not know (yea right well) that this to-day
 hath been so fast, strong and unmovable, as that no man can enter in, nor
 go out, without your knowledge? For you have always the keeping of
 the keys, and will not trust any man therewith: how were it then
 possible that I should be there? Sometimes you that find out men
 to be like another, you remember of late how you did mistake the
 knights ring, imagining it to be of silver which you gave me and have
 now yet more argumens of suspicion against me: was it not sufficient
 for you to be so of my liberty for these many years, but I must
 needs be jealous of me besides? I tell thee, O Noble King,
 that if you do not forsake this jealousy, and also release me out of
 this place of imprisonment, that before some days he expired, I
 will end my days herein: for I had rather live as a servant at liberty,
 than now for to be a queen, and to live herein as a prisoner.
 Then the king answered, and said unto her, All this that you have
 related is true, for which cause I acknowledge my self to be guilty
 of all these accusation: wherefore have patience but for some few
 days, and as soon as I reign king of this Countrey and Castle, I
 will set you at liberty, and so he lovingly embraced her with a kiss,
 and then returned to his own lodging. Now he had not ruled in
 his lodging above two days, before the knight came unto the castle,
 and said unto the king, O my honorable Lord, I have of long
 time served your Highness, and now it is time that I return again
 unto mine own Countrey, and for all the service that I have done
 unto your Honor, I desire that you would do but this one thing
 for me, that is, that you my Noble Lord would order the

The seven Wise Masters.

And when my departure came, which is to give to my dear
 Lady whom I intended to wed, who hath followed me out of
 my country for the love of me, and whom I shall bring rather
 as my lawful and true wife, the which thing will be much more
 honour and honour, when I shall come unto my own Country.
 The king answered and said unto him. That petition, and much more
 than that, (if you will desire it of me) will I gladly do and
 fulfil. When the knight perceived the day of their marriage, as when
 the good king came to the Church, being honourably attended.
 The which he was ready, and stood adorned with his ornaments
 for to solemnize the matrimony. The knight having apparelled
 himself in his own house, after the manner of his own Country,
 and had ordered two knights for to lead her unto the Church, as
 they believed that it had been his paramour. And when they
 came unto the face of the Church, the Priest said, What shall
 this woman to this knight? Then the king said, I shall give
 unto my own knight, and took the Lady by the hand, and said
 to her, O good woman, you are much like unto my queen, and
 therefore my love is to you the greater, and also because you that
 wedded unto this knight, whom I affect above all other men, and
 he that be of my house, and so be put the queens hand into the knights
 hand. And then the Priest after the order of the ceremonies of
 the Church, do and them, and wedded them together in the true and
 faithful wedlock.

And when all these Rites were finished and done, the knight
 came unto the king, and said, O Noble King, the ship that I intend to
 go in towards my Country, is now named very fitting for my journey,
 and now is ready for to sail away. Wherefore I humbly beseech
 your most noble Grace, that it will please you to accompany my de-
 parture thence, and that you will reverence and honour me
 and me, I that should have me in favor above all other creatures
 living, and so much the rather, for your good reputation and com-
 mendation. Then the king with a great company of his followers
 besides others, went with them, and did accompany them
 to the ship, for whose departure to the ship, many of them were
 being sorrowful and heavy. Then the king began to say unto the
 most dear friend, hearken now well unto my counsel, and
 that you follow it, for it shall be to your profit. My much beloved
 and beloved knight hath now wedded and done to you all the words
 and honor that in him is, therefore look that ye love, honor, and
 obey him above all earthly creatures, as God hath commanded, and
 that you be unto him true and constant in all your dealings. And
 as soon as this speech was ended, he delivered her unto the knight
 saying, My blessing go with you both, and our Lord keep and
 preserve you in safety unto your own Country. Then the knight
 and the queen bowed and inclined their heads down to the king, and
 gave him thanks for all those courtesies and kindnesses that he had
 done for them: and having so done, they committed him to the
 ship, and entered into the ship, and the Mariners hoisted up their
 sails, and sailed forth before the wind, so that within a short space
 the king saw not the sight of the ship. And from thence he went back
 into his Castle, and being come thither, he presently went to seek
 for his queen, and when he could not find her, he was then moved in
 his mind.

The seven Wise Master.

49

the words of his body, and taught all about the Tower: he carried
long, until at last he found out the hole of the letter, and then the
light had gotten to be made, and as he saw that, he went off
out, and said, Alas, alas, this Knight in whom I put so
much confidence and trust, hath robbed me, and taken away my wife
and not a fool, that I gave more faith to the words of a Knight
than I did to mine own eyes: then spake the emperor and said, Now
will I have you understand what I have said: The Emperor said,
in the best wise that may be. Then answered the Emperor,
and said unto him, Remember how that he trusted the knight, and
that knight deceived him: in like manner you will put your trust
and confidence in the seven wise masters, and they labor for to de-
ceive you, I am your wife, and you gave more credit to their words
than ye do unto your own eyes: for you have well seen how your in-
dications son hath rent and scratched me, whereof yet I bear and
see his tokens and marks about me, as you may plainly see: and
do you know right well, how that your accursed son hath ashamed
me, and you mark not how they defend him in this their folly and
crime (al though) therefore it is to be feared, that it will happen un-
to you, worse then it did to the king of whom I have spoken unto
already. The emperor replied, I will believe mine own eyes
more than that I will give any credence to their words, and therefore I
will come unto you, to morrow that I do you justice upon my Son. The
next day the emperor commanded that his son should be brought be-
fore him, which thing being done according to his desire, he then
commanded that his son should be led unto the place of execution, and
there to suffer death according to the law. Then there began to arise
a great noise, and much bewailing amongst the common people, for
the death of the Emperors only Son. At the last, when the seventh
wise master heard and perceived that, he ran immediately unto the Em-
peror, which were leading him to the gallows, and said unto them,
O my dear beloved friends, I pray you not to make overmuch hast,
for your hands yet a while, for I think this day (with the gra-
cious help and assistance of almighty God) to save and deliver him
from all perils and dangers: and from hence the master hastened him
renewed to the emperors palace: & there he did him reverence accord-
ing to his accustomed duty. But the emperor with great wrath and
 indignation against him, made him this answer: Never more have
any joy nor comfort in this world, for that you have sent my son
both untaught and dumb, whom I delivered unto you well
taught, for which cause you shall all be put to death by him. The
wise master answered, and said unto him, O most noble Emperor, the
time is not long betwixt this & to morrow noon: then (by the
grace of God) you shall hear him speak, and that both wisely and
rightly, and unto you he shall declare the truth of all things: and
that I will promise you he will perform to the full, upon pain of my
life. If you will spare him so long time: if you find it not so, then
I will lose my life, and the lives of us all. Then said the emperor, I
will spare him but hear my Son speak, it would give me sufficient con-
fidence, and I would no longer longer far to live. Then answered
the wise master, and said unto him again, All this and more you shall
hear and see, and confess it to be true, if you will but spare
him so long time, and then that this difference be only known and the
truth that both been betwixt us and the Emperor, will clearly be
made.

The knight was fished by the gallows, that was not far from the City, and
 he was so cold that he could not possibly endure it. But when he came
 to the gallows, he thought that he might speedily warm him if he was to
 be hanged there. And so great a frost: & by chance he beholding from thence
 the church-yard, and seeing a fire in the Church-yard, hasted him to
 the same: and when he was come near unto it, he called and knocked at
 the house. Then the woman spake and said, What is that, who art
 thou? he answered her, I am the Sheriff that hath endured much cold, that I am ready
 to be hanged here, unless without delay you let me in to warm myself.
 She said unto him, I fear that if I let you in, ye should shew me such
 news, that shall cause me to be more heavy. Then he said, I promise you
 that I shall say no words to your displeasure. Then she let him
 in, and when he had sitten a while by the fire, and was well warmed,
 he said unto her, O fair woman, with your licence wot I speak
 to you one word. She answered him, Sir, say what it pleaseth
 you. Then he said, O Lady, you be a fair gentle woman, rich and
 loving. Were it not better and more convenient for you to dwell
 in the tower at your house, and to give alms, than to waste and consume your
 wealth here in weeping & crying? She said, Sir knight, had I known
 this before, you had not come herein: for I say to you, as I have said
 unto others oftentimes. You know well that my husband loved me
 very well, that for a little blood that he saw in, to bleed out of one of
 my fingers he is dead, wherefore I will here die for love of him. And
 when the knight heard this, he took his leave and went again unto the
 gallows. And when he was come thither, and saw that the thief that
 was left there hanging was hollen and carried away, he began to weep
 bitterly and fell for sorrow, and said, What is me, what shall I do? For
 I have lost my life and all my goods, and he going up and down thus
 great all of sorrow, and knew not what way to turn himself: at the last
 he began to bewail himself to go to the desolate Lady, and shew unto her
 the heaviness of his heart, to wit, if she could give him any good counsel
 in this. And when he was come thither, he called, and he asked her the
 cause of his knocking. Then he said, O Adam, I am the Sheriff, I
 am right now with you, and I would fain shew unto you the secrets
 of my heart, therefore I pray you for the love of God, open the door,
 and I will come in, and shew unto her, O most virtuous Lady, I am now
 come to have your counsel and advice, for you know well the laws of
 the land are, that whensoever any man is hanged and hollen from
 the gallows, then the Sheriff's life and goods be in the King's
 hands. Now it happened in the time that I was here with you and
 bewailed me: & the chief is hollen from the gallows, therefore I pray
 you, O Lady, for the love of God, give me your best advice, what is best
 to do. She answered, I have compassion upon you, for by the laws
 you have lost your life, and goods to the King, do now as I may
 counsel and ye shall neither lose life nor goods. He answered, O most
 virtuous Lady, I am greatly bound, hoping to have good comfort. She said, I will
 give you then promise to take me to your wife. The knight answered,
 I would God that you were indeed minded: but I fear that you shall
 obtain so much to humble you to me, that I am to pay a knight.
 She said, I give you my will therein, and he gave her again his
 will, and consented to be her knight during all his life. Then she
 said, You know well that such a day my Lord hath bid me, to be
 hanged.

for the love of me died; take him out of the sepulchre; and go and hang him up in stead of the thief. The knight answered her, And your counsel is very good. Then went they together, and opened the sepulchre, and drew him out. The knight said unto the Lady, What wilt thou do, because ere the thief was taken and hanged, one of his upper teeth was smitten out of his head, and I greatly fear me, if that were perceived, I should die the death? Then the Lady said unto him, Take a stone and strike out two of his teeth. And the knight answered, Madam, that may I not do, for he is alive; he was my trusty and well-beloved friend, and it should be me a great rebuke, if I should consent to do so disloyal a deed unto his body, being dead. She answered, For your love shall I do it, and presently took a stone and smote out two of his teeth, and said to the Sheriff, Take him and hang him upon the gallows like to the thief. And the knight said, I fear me to do it, for the thief in taking him, was wounded upon his head, and he lacked both his ears. Madam, God forbid that I do so to the dead body; I loved to live in his life. Then said she, Give me your sword, and I shall for the love of you do it; and so took the sword and smote a manly stroke on the dead mans forehead, and cut off both his ears; and when he had thus done, she said, Now take and hang him without company. And then the knight answered, Per I fear to hang him, for the thief wanted both his hands, and if that he were searched and found without all our labor, were in vain. Then said she, I never saw a man so fearful, seeing the matter so clear and sure; take a knife, and cut off his hands. And he answered, that may I not do in any town, and therefore I pray you spare me, for ye know well what a man without his hands. She said, For the love of you I shall do it, and took the knife in her hand, and cut off her husbands hands, and laid them to him. Now take the churl thus disfigured, and hang him up with our friend; and they went both together, and hung the body upon the gallows, and so was the Sheriff delivered to the kings anger. Then said the Lady, Now ye be quit of all your dangers, and deliver from all sorrows and dangers, by my counsel, therefore I desire you (according to your promise) that ye wed me in the face of the Church. The knight said, I have made a vow that I will never wed another so long as you live, which I shall perform. And then he said, O the most honorable and good woman of all women, who would take thee to be his wife? an honorable and loving knight was thy husband, who for a little blood that he saw issue out of thy finger, didst thou have smitten out two of his teeth, thou hadst cut off his ears, and his hands, and thou hadst made him a great wound in his head; what devil would marry thee? And therefore thou shalt never have good men more, I will cut thee of the life; and so he drew out his sword, and with one stroke he smote off her head. Then the Master said unto the Emperor, My Lord, have ye understood what I have said? And he answered, Right well. Amongst all women this was the worst, and the knight rewarded her accordingly, so that he should no more do men harm. And the Emperor was very merry. O my good Master, might I but once hear my son speak, I should have no care of my life. Then said the Master, Tomorrow you shall hear him speak before you, and he shall shew the end of all the differences between us and the Emperor, as I have said, and so took his leave of the Emperor, and departed.

How **DIOCLEIAN** the Emperors Son complained on the Emperess, and how he excused himself to her complaint.

After that all the Masters assembled together and took counsel how or in what manner they should bring the child out of prison and lead him to the Palace: and so they went to the child in the day lay in prison before midday, his will and counsel for to hear. Then the child said, What you will that shall please me: but in no wise hurt your selves both I that answer, or what I that say: for with I that answer all things I that be demanded of me. When the seven wise Masters heard that, they were exceeding joyful and glad, and they clothed him in purple, and in cloth of gold, and two of the Masters went before him, and one upon his right hand, another upon his left hand and the other three followed after him: and before them all went twelve men in instruments of music, who brought him in great honour and melody to the Palace: and when the Emperor heard all this melody, he demanded what it was: Then it was told him by the standers by, saying, Mighty Emperor, it is your Son which cometh before you, and before all your Lords, to speak and excuse himself of all that is laid unto his charge. The Emperor said that is good tidings. If I might hear my Son speak: And when the child was come into the Palace, he rode to his Father, and said unto him, Hail my most dear and most royal Father.

And when the Emperor heard the voice of his Son Dioclesian he was so glad that for joy he fell down to the earth: but his Son haden taken up the emperor his father again: and when he was come to himself, then began his son to declare and open all the whole matter unto his Father: and then there came so great a multitude of people into the Palace to hear the child speak, and the joy and noise of them were so great that the child could not possibly be heard. The emperor considering that, caused money to be throned into the streets, that the people therewith should be busied and a voice out of the Palace that thereby they might the better hear the child speak: but the folk took no regard at all after the money which was cast abroad. And when the emperor perceived that, violently he commanded silence upon pain of their lives. And when they were all still, then the child began to speak, as followeth: O most dear father, before that I speak any thing, I intreat and beseech you, & the emperess, & all her chamber maids, & all her chamber-maids to come without delay. The emperess hearing that (being in great fear) came with all her maidens, and the child commanded them to stand before all the people in a room that they might see them. Then said the child, Sit, lift up your eyes, and behold the chamber-maid that standeth there in the green clothing, whom you know the emperess loveth best above all others: command her to be unclothed unto her naked body, before us all, and let us see what she is. The emperor said, my dear son, that would shame us all, to see a woman to stand naked before us. He said, If it be a woman, it is my shame, and if not, let the shame abide in her. When that she was unclothed, they all saw, it was a man, and so it appeared, that great they greatly wondered.

The Declaration of the Complaint of the Emperors Son on the Emperess.

Then said the Son unto his Father, Behold this man, who

and hath defiled your bed, and thus the emperors mother, and
 others, the which things you did not know. The emperor said, I
 would that the emperor had seen and beheld these things, by the
 great indignation and wrath have commanded that both the
 emperess and the ribauld should be burnt: but the son answered
 said, My Lord and Father, make no haste to give judgement; but
 I have removed her of these grievous slanders that she doth say
 to accuse me of, and that I have declared how untruthfully she hath
 plained of me, and sought by all means how she might take away
 from me. Then said the emperor, My dear son, I commit all my
 judgement into your hands. The son answered and said, If the
 world fall and a year, then the law that give sentence against
 but my loyal father, when you sent after me, at her earnest re-
 quere, then I with my Masters beheld the stars in the firmament
 by which I might perceive, that if I should have spoken any word
 unto you, or any other living creature, within the space of ten
 days, I should have died a most shameful death, and for that cause
 only I did forbear to speak until this present. And whereas she
 says most unjustly hath accused me, that I should have oppressed
 ravished her, there in I say she lieth falsely, for the most adultery
 would have provoked me, for to defile the bed of my most gracious
 Lord and my Father the emperor, and when she in no wise
 being me thereto, then she took a pen, ink, and paper, and wrote
 under the cause wherefore I would not yield unto that which she
 earnestly desired? And when that I had written the cause wherefore
 I would not commit such a great and abominable sin and how that
 I would not my fathers orchard defile, then began she to tear her
 clothes, and scratch her visage, that it gushed forth with blood, and
 cryed with a loud voice, and said, This your son (having a mind full
 of lust) would have twonged your princely bed, and I refused his
 foul mind, most inhumanly hath he torn my flesh: when the emperor
 heard this, he beheld her with a full countenance and said unto
 in this manner, O thou wretched woman, was it not sufficient
 fulfil thy lecherous appetite, thou and thy ribauld, but wouldst
 have made my son? Then fell the emperess to the emperors feet, and
 she cryed unto him for mercy. The emperor said, O thou cruel
 most unhappy woman, thou askest forgiveness, and thou art worth
 none to have, for thou hast defiled to die in that manner of law.
 The first is, that thou hast committed adultery. The second is, that
 thou most lasciviously hath provoked and stirred up my son unto
 most wicked and abominable sin, and hast imputed and laid the
 crime falsely and unjustly upon him. And the third and last
 that thou hast every day incited and provoked me with thy false tale
 to put my son to death: and therefore the law that have his count
 against thee, and that condemn thee unto death according as the
 law hath decreed.
 Then answered his son, and said, most noble Father, you know
 well that for the leasings that she hath laid upon me, I was daily
 unto hanging: but my Masters with the help of God, hath delivered
 me. O my most honorable Lord and Father, it was said unto
 by the emperess, that I would also by the help of my Masters, depart
 you out of your empire, and that I did labor by all means possible
 to deliver you, and to see my self in your kingdom: would you not

The Example of DIOCESIAN the Emperors Son.

There was a knight which had but one son that he loved right dearly. In the beginning, as ye now all only have loved me: to whom he desired to be brought up in a far Country, for to be brought up in learning and knowledge: This child as he waxed in years, so he increased in wisdom and knowledge, and profited himself very much therein. And when he had been with his Father seven years, his Father desired to see him and sent letters unto him that he should come again into his Country: and writ his friends in like sort, as you have seen for me. The child was obedient to his father, and came to his commandment: for to his coming he did exceedingly joy: for that he was grown as tall in continuance of body, as also in doctrine and learning, and to every man he appeared pleasant and gentle.

It happened upon a day that the Father and the mother sitting at the table, and the child served them, a nightingale came flying before the window where they sat, & began to sing sweetly, that they marvelled: & the knight said, O how sweetly this bird singeth the well that he that could understand his song, and could show the interpretation thereof. Then said the son, My worshipful Father, the song of this nightingale I could well declare, but I fear your displeasure. The Father said, say boldly my son the interpretation of the birds, and then ye shall prove whether I that be angry or no: but I that mark shall the reason of mine anger. And when the son heard that, he said, the nightingale hath said in his song, that I that becom a great man, know I that be worshippen and honored of all men, and namely of my Father, the which shall bring me water to wash my hands and my feet: the mother that hath the child. The Father said, Thou shalt neither

the say such service of me to have, nor none such dignity that followeth: and in great mapaine and woopines, he took his son upon his shoulder, and ran to the sea, and cast him in, and said, I am interpreter of the birds song. The child could swim, and swam to a land, where he was four days without meat or drink: the fifth day there came a ship sailing: and as the child saw that he came unto the ship-men, and said, for the love of God deliver me from the peril of death. The ship-men saw that it was a fair young man, and they had compassion on him, and went with the boat to fetch him aboard, and carried him into a far Country, and sold him there to a Duke. The child grew very proper and fair, and the Duke loved him much, and had him greatly in favour.

And upon a time, the King of that Realm, did call a general assembly of all the great Lords, and noble men, within the Realm together, for it to sit in counsel. This duke then prepared and advised him to go to the said Council, and gave great regard unto the wit and wisdom of the child, and therefore took the child with him: and when they were all gathered and assembled before the king and his counsel: my well beloved Lords, and friends, said the King, with you know the cause wherefor I have assembled you together: I have answered and said, we all are, Sovereign Lord, at your commandment. Then said the king, It is a secret matter that I shall show you, if any man can open it, and declare what it signifyeth. I swear and promise unto him by my crown, that I will give unto him mine only daughter in marriage, and he shall be my fellow in my Realm so long as life doth last: and after my death, he shall have and possess all my whole kingdom: and the mystery of the counsel is this.

Three ravens follow me still wheresoever I go, they leave me not, but cry out in such horrible voices, that the pain is grievous, and wearisome for me to hear them, and much need to help to their looks: wherefor if there be any man, which in some way or other, by their earnest following me, and can tell of them what they mean by their crying, I avoid them away from me, without doubt I shall fulfil this promise that I have made. And as the king had thus said, there was none found in all the Council that understood the cause, or could remove it, but away the ravens. Then answered the child, and said unto the duke, my Lord, think you that the king will perform what he hath promised, and will you, I give the king knowledge of you, what you can do? Then the child said, I will my life set in pledge, and I shall perform and make it good what I have said, when the Duke heard that, he went to the king, and said, my Lord, and king, here is a young man right cunning and wise, and he hath promised to fulfil and satisfy in all things that you shall ask and desire, touching these ravens, if you will fulfil what you have promised, the king (made by the contract of his kingdom, that which I have promised, all things shall be fulfilled. Then he brought the child before the King, and when the king had beheld him, he made unto him after this manner: O fair child, can you give answer to this my question? The child answered, and said, Yes my Lord, and that is the best manner: your question is, wherefore the ravens follow you and horrible call upon you, to which I answer: upon a time it happened, that there were three ravens, a male and a female, that had brought out between them a great quarrel, and in a place that was such a great famine and scarcity of all manner of food, the

the action of their lives, in they say that men, beasts, & fowls die
 a married for want. Now the male raven was at that time very
 young, and not able to fly abroad to get her siblings, the female he left
 taking whereby he might best get her own living: & so show that
 had nothing regard her young one, he came no more to the nest.
 male raven seeing that, with great penury & labor fed the young
 men till he was able to fly: and now when the great dearth was
 in hand again, then the female raven returned home again to the young
 men, and would hold fellowship and company with him, but the
 male raven seeing that, he would have driven her away, saying, I
 am in his great misery and necessity left him and his company, and
 therefore now he would have no company nor fellowship with her.
 he allured and said, that he had in his hatching great labor and
 pain, and suffered much penury, and for I could he would rather
 joy in company then I male raven. For this cause, my sovereign
 lord, they follow you, asking true judgement which of them both
 shall have company with the young raven: and this is the cause of
 this horrible clamor and noise that they make daily unto you.

But my honored Lord, had you thereupon a right wise sentence gi-
 ven, you that never more see them, or be troubled with their crying.
 then answered the king, and said, Because that the female hath best
 and mistaken the young raven in his most necessity, I standeth with
 reason, and justice, that she should not follow him, but be without
 fellowship: and where the said that in the hatching and bring-
 ing forth of him she had great pain and travail that he hath not, for
 her pain was turned into joy, as soon as she saw the young raven in
 the world. But in regard that the male is the cause of production,
 and generation of every beast of the earth, and every fowl of the
 air, and also because the young raven in his necessity, was sustain-
 ed, and fed unto the recovering and nourishing of his body by the
 male: therefore I conclude both for judgement and sentence de-
 claring, that the young raven shall abide and keep company with
 the male, and not with the female.

And when the ravens heard that sentence, with great noise and
 cry they flew up into the air, and were no more seen nor found in
 that Region.

When this was done, the king demanded of the young man, what
 his name was, he answered, and said, I am called Alexander: then
 said the king, I will that you should grant me one request, which
 is, that from henceforth you shall name, and take me, and none other
 in your father: for you that have my daughter to wife and you that
 have the whole government and possession of this my Realm. Which
 young Alexander obeyed, and will still there with being and every
 man did exceedingly love and favor him, for he began to hunt in the
 great Conquers, wherein at all times he did win the prey before all
 others that were in Egypt, so that the price of the was not to be
 found: neither was there so hard or obscure question put to him,
 but that he could make known the true sense and meaning thereof.

At that time there was an Emperor whose name was Darius that
 reigned in Gentile, courtly, and civil, all other emperors,
 kings and princes in the whole world followed him, his law and
 his law and can over the world of that time, for he was the
 most learned and most cunning, and most honorable man that
 was in that time. And when Alexander heard thereof he said

The Seven Wife Masters.

to the king. My most honorable Lord and Father, you know how much
that the world is full of the fame of the emperor, that it is so
lovely and pleasant to abide and dwell in his court: therefore I
pray you, my renowned Lord and Father, I would very gladly
to his Court, to the intent that I may obtain more wisdom,
and prosper in manners and behavior then now I am. The king
answered the king, it pleased me right well: but I would, before you
take with you plenty of gold and silver, and other necessities,
much that you mine honor there may save, and that you may have
also that which is to you most requisite, and necessary. And
it seemeth unto me very expedient, that before your departing
I should marry my daughter.

Then answered Alexander, will it please you, my Lord, to
marry me at this time, and at my coming home again I shall wed her again, and
all honor as unto her appert. Inerth. The king answered, since
it is your will to go unto the Emperors Court, I licence it: and
there unto I give my consent. Then Alexander did take his leave
of the king, and took with him abundance of treasure, and
he went to the Emperors Court: and when he was come
many followers, he went before the Emperor, and fell upon his
knees, and saluted him and did him reverence.

The emperor rose up from his seat Imperial, and kissed him, and
asked of him, whence he was: and wherefore he was come
thence. He answered and said, I am son and heir of the king of France,
and am come to do service to your most high Majesty, if it please
you to accept of me. The emperor said, that he was right heartily
welcome, and committed him to his steward and made him his chamber-
lain. The steward furnished him a fair Chamber, and provided
him all things that were necessary to the same: and Alexander
began to love himself so well, & in short time he was beloved of all people
that long after that, came the kings son of France to do service
to the emperor, and to learn good qualities, and fair and comely
behavior: him the emperor received honorably, and he demanded his
name, and of what kindred he was come: He answered, I am
son to the king of France, and I have to name Lodowick your servant.
Then said the emperor, I have made Alexander my Chamberlain, and
that he my cup-bearer, I will have you that do service at my table,
I commanded the steward to assign him a lodging, whom he placed
very Alexander in his chamber. These two gentlemen were so like
in stature and visage, and condition, that hardly the one might be
known of known from the other, but that Alexander was more
cheerful in all his deeds then was Lodowick, for he was a gentleman
man, and shamefaced, and these young men well loved together.

The emperor had one only daughter named Florentine, she was
right fair and gracious, and should be his heir, whom he loved
very dearly: she had a Court by her self, and servants to her assigned: to her
emperor, every day was accustomed to send from his Table of
necessities, in token of love, by Alexander: in such that the daughter
began to love him marvellously in her heart, because of his wisdom
and comely behavior. It happened upon a day, Alexander at men-
ceur had such business, that he served not at the Table, nor
other gave attendance for him in his room: Lodowick perceived
& served in his room, and as soon as he had served the emperor,
he took service upon his knees, the emperor commanded him to

26

and Alexander being done, anon Lodowick went to the bed sick,
 and Alexander preceeding that, went to his chamber and said unto
 Haman, O my best beloved friend and fellow Lodowick, how is it with
 you, and what is the cause of your infirmity? He answered him and
 said, The cause I know not but I feel me sore sick, but I fear me I
 cannot escape the death. Alexander said, The cause of some kind of
 death and disease I well know: for to day as ye did bear the oath to the
 King's daughter, ye beheld her countenance and beauty so fir-
 mly, that your heart was taken, and ravished with her love.
 Haman was answered, O Alexander, all the Physicians in the
 world could not more truly judge my sickness, but I fear it will be
 my death. Then said Alexander, Be of good comfort, I will help
 you to my power, and so forthwith went to the merchant and bought
 him a new gown and a fair cloth, for many precious stones, unknown
 to Lodowick, and presented it in his behalf unto the Princess. He
 perceived as he beheld that the gown him where he had that costly and pre-
 cious cloth. And he said, Haman, of the Sun of the most Christian
 King of France, who sendeth it unto you for your love, for he having
 heard once beheld your princely face is grown to sick, that he hath
 given his bed even unto his death: therefore if you suffer him to perish,
 remember that never recover again your honor.

of the ... and ...

The seven Wife Masters.

to her in the behalf of Lodowick: and when he saw and heard the
gift so precious, he laid unto Alexander, that he should come to my chamber about the third hour in the night, and he
knew the door open, and Alexander hearing that was glad, and went
to his fellow, and said, O my beloved fellow, be of good comfort,
for I have conquered the Princes to you, and this night I shall bring
you to her chamber. And when that was said, he started up, and
though he had wakened out of his sleep, and was well revived, and
for great joy he became well: the next night following, Alexander
took Lodowick and brought him unto the chamber of the King, into
whom he was in solace and joy all night, and from that time forth
all her heart was upon him, so that there was but one only love be-
tween them both.

And after that, Lodowick used oftentimes to visit her, so that by
plots of time it came to the ears of the knights and gentle men of
the Court, how that the Emperors daughter was known by Lodo-
wick, and they conspired among themselves, how they might find
him, and intrap him therewith, and so for to take him. As Alex-
ander had knowledge thereof, he armed him to withstand them: and
when the knights understood that, they fearing Alexander, suffered
his fellow to go in peace. Alexander many times put himself in
way for him, he not knowing thereof: but the Princes knew
it well.

In their time after that, there came Letters to Alexander, of the
death of the King of Egypt, that he should hastily come, and re-
ceive his Kingdom with honor and joy: and that should be even un-
to the Princes and to Lodowick, and also of his departing: where-
for they were sorrowful and heavy. He also wrote unto the Emperor,
O my honorable Lord, please it you to understand, that I have re-
ceived letters of the death of my Father, wherefore it behoveth me
to go, and receive the Kingdom, and that you will be pleased to give
me leave to depart; and for all the benefits to me done, I offer my
self and all my goods: and rather than I should by my going any
way offend or displease you, my Lord, I will forsake all my Realm,
and all that I have in the world, and abide with you still. Then said
the Emperor, Know you for a certain, that for your departure I am
right heavy and sorrowful, for you were the best servant that was in
all my Court: but it becometh not an Emperor, to hinder his ser-
vants from their promotion, or advancements, but rather promote
them to higher or greater honor. Therefore go you unto our Coun-
treys, and he shall deliver you as much Gold as you will have, and
in the name of God (and my blessing) go into your Countrey. And
thus Alexander had his leave of the Emperor, and bade him fare-
well: and they were all sorrowful for his departure, for he was
beloved of all.

Lodowick with the Princes, brought him on his way seven miles,
in the land. After that, Alexander would not suffer them to go any
further, then fell they both to the ground with great sorrow and be-
wails, and Alexander took and lifted him up again from the ground,
and comforted him in all words, and said, O Lodowick, my be-
loved fellow, I warn you that the secrets being between you and
me, you hide and keep them as wisely as you may, and take
care to all things, for I trust another shall come, and be in re-
gard that you enjoy you of the crown and grace that you have in hand.

the Emperour, and day and night that lay in wait to take you with a
snaile, and to put you into rebuke and shame. Then answered Lo-
dowick and said, O Alexander, I shal be warr as much as is in me
possible: but how shal I do when I want your company? Therefore
as thing I shal desire of you, that you take this Ring of mine as
remembrance. Then said he, I shal for the love of you gladly re-
ceive your Ring, and yet I shal never without the Ring forget you,
and so he committed them both unto God. Then they embraced each
other about the neck, and kissed, and so they departed.

Not long after, the Kings son of Spain, named Guiso, was re-
ceived of the Emperour, in the room and place of Alexander: to whom
he becam assigned Alexanders place and chamber: the which was
well sore against the will of Lodowick, but he could not bethin-
ke Guiso seeing that Lodowick against his will had him in his fellow-
ship, he grew envious against him: so Lodowick of a long time for
lack of the said Guiso, kept him out of his companie of the Ladies
where he is afterwards being overcome with her love, sometimes he
launth and went again unto her as he before had done: Guiso
purcellis perceiving the same, waited so long thereon, that he knew
the truth, and was therefore certain that the Duncels was by Lodo-
wick known, and had companie with her.

Upon a time it happened that the Emperour stood in the hall, and
praised Alexander for his gentlenels and wisdom, Guiso hearing
that, said, My Lord, he is not so much worthy to be commended as
you think, for he hath a long time been a Traitor in your house.

Then the Emperour said, Tell me how: Guiso said you have but
one only daughter, the which shal be your heir, and her Lodowick
hath desired, and taken by, through the help of Alexander, and he go-
eth to her every night as it pleased him.

And as soon as the Emperour heard thereof, he was sore moved, and
began to be angry, and it happened Lodowick upon the same time to
come thow the hall, and as the Emperour saw him, he said, what
bear I of thee, thou evil and untrue boy? If it be found and pro-
ved true thou shalt die the most shameful death that can be devised.
Lodowick said, My Lord the Emperour, what is the cause? Guiso
answered, I say and depole here before my Lord against thee, that
thou hast desired his only daughter, and every night thou goest to
her, and dost fornication with her, and with battell I shal prove and
make it good upon the body with my body. Then said Lodowick
I am innocent, and not infected with that crime, and falsly thou
dost besle me, and hereupon I hold the battell, and trust to God the
hallood shal come upon thine own head. Then the Emperour assign-
ed unto them the day of combat. That done, Lodowick went unto
the Ladies, and helped her the cause and the day of battell, by the
Emperour assigned, and in what manner Guiso had accused him, and
said unto her, Now it behoveth me to have your counsel or else I
must die: for as you know, it hath not anaided me to have gainst
the battell, without I should have yielded my self guilty: Guiso is
strong and hardy, that his like is none but Alexander. And I am
feeble, and therefore if I fight the battell against him, I were but a
dead man, and so you shal have rebuke and shame. Then said she,
I follow my counsel in that you mistrust your self, go hastily into my
father, and say unto him, that ye have received letters, whereby you
are assured that the King your father is sore sick, and lyeth upon his
death.

Health-bed, and desire to see you, and to speak with you in person, and
and to see of his Kingdom before he depart out of this life: he
desired you to give you leave for the long of your father to go with him
him, and that he will provide him the day of his death, that he
in the night before you may go and come, and when you have gone
ten leade, as hard as you can, secretly go to King Alexander, and
being thither come, take him apart and show him the cause of your
coming, and require him in this your great extremitie, that he
will help and save us.

And when Ladvick had heard that counsel, it pleased him much
and he did accordingly: And having obtained leave, and along day
and repair of the bachel perished and assigned, he then departed and
took his journey towards the Realm of Egypt, and news being
day not yet, till he came into King Alexanders Castle.

And when that King Alexander had understanding of his coming, and
he was very glad, and went to meet him, and received him honourably
by, and he did wonder much at his coming. When into Ladvick
my most dear Lord, and my best beloved friend, my life and
dearly is in your hands, for as you said to me before, that I should
have another fellow, which should be to wait to give me a
me, without I did lose more wisely unto my self: so as long as
could, I did abide from her till I might no longer abide, but
towards the king's son of Spain made watch in long after me, and
at his attempt the truth: for he can be accused me to the Emperor
so in the night thereafter from this day. I must be ready and
pare for to fight with him, both against him: and as ye know, I am
he is a very strong and hardy man, and I am weak and feeble, and
overcome by Florentine counselled me that I should not bid him
matter from you, for he knoweth you for a faithful friend, and
that you would not leave us in this great necessity.

When this Alexander, he there any body that knoweth of your
coming unto me for this matter, more than Florentine he answer
perish, and this, the creature living, for I took leave of the Emperor
say to me my father, lying extremely sick. When Alexander
asked of him, what he counselled him Florentine give you now, and
for what will you? He said, I am most constant and
faithful friend, in this will he hath counselled me, considering
we be like each other, that you should come and perform the bachel
with him, and no man should know you but he: and the bachel
doubt I would come again to the Court, and you return back to
your own Country. When he asked him, where the day should
be of the bachel: And he said right near hence.

When this Alexander, if I should bid you stay before I
pass hence, then I cannot come by the day perished, which upon
Bachman says I shall do, I have hidden all the subjects, I am most
your day should come to my mourning: if I should go, then I
day, for I go not and in the battle, then Florentine and you
advice: what think you is best to be done? When Ladvick
said that he will to the court, and began to draw out of measure
Ladvick and he himself came thither to me as all when
When said Alexander, how now, is it your counsel, for I shall
forbid you to see my father, I should not be able and dangerous
and that, what I have thought upon: I think that he will not

And when Ladvick had heard that counsel, it pleased him much
and he did accordingly: And having obtained leave, and along day
and repair of the bachel perished and assigned, he then departed and
took his journey towards the Realm of Egypt, and news being
day not yet, till he came into King Alexanders Castle.

Tax-Covered Wife Matters

[illegible]

On the following Alexander the day that was perfired and left came
before the emperor, and said, O most Sovereign Lord, it is in that
and I have left my father very sick, and in a great hazard of death, yet
this notwithstanding I came to perform my promise, and with a full
affection to defend my honor. The emperor said, you be honorable
and according to the valor of a noble man, and fortunate that I have
you for a son. I thought in your last and righteous quarrel.

Dear old friend and brother, I am, quite heartily and unreservedly, convinced, that your most noble effort, in facing that I should meet you, and acquire more fully the English, your most virtuous and noble character, which is the great source of your most noble performance, is, indeed, the most noble and efficient by the holy Evangelists, even though it may seem to be a manner of self-knowledge by means of which you are, though not followed into you, which I feel more and more noble and true to his heart, with the aid and help of God.

subject:

And when the Virgin took his more and more, in her heart
she thought and imagined how they might be long, and then
singing, and therefore she got joyous and joyous at the thing, so that
when he had not been in the army of complexion, he had died thereof for
sorrow, and in him to love, that it caused him to be a small fool, and
Fate itself, for as now was seen upon the earth. The King and
the Queen, when they saw this, and the Queen also, seeing this, he
said to him, and said, that it behoveth not a leper to reign over us,
and he said to not procure nor ingender any fair or clean heirs, and so
he was banished of his dignity royal, and banished out of his Realm,
as when the man time with the Emperor of Rome, and Lodowick
a fatherless daughter, and after that Lodowick the father died, so
that Lodowick reigns both Emperor of Rome, and King of
France at once.

Then king Alexander heard that, he thought in himself. *What
a fellow ruthless and ruthless both the Empire of Rome, and
of France: to whom may I go better then unto him, for
I have many times ventured my life: and upon a night he
will up and make him ready, and took with him his staff and clapper,
and went towards the Emperors Countrey.*
And when he was come nigh unto the gate, he late down amongst
the poor layes, expecting the giving of alms: and upon a sudden
the emperor went out of the palace, all the poor layes began to
ring their clappers, and the good king Alexander did as the others
did, but there was no alms given him: he tarried so long until
many times that the Emperor was set and sether at the table.
Then went king Alexander unto the gate, and knocked thereat,
and the porter asked, Who was there? Alexander answered him,
I am a poor distressed man, I pray you for the love of God, then and
again your sight from my visage, but that you will for the reward of
heaven, do my message unto the emperor. He asked what is the mat-
ter? Alexander said, Go and tell him, here is a Lazer, that is
not able to be brought to see, the which prayeth him for plene of God,
and king Alexander, that he will grant him this day to eat his alms
before him upon the earth in his hall. The porter answered, I mon-
ter that you thus desire that of my Lord: for why? All the hall is
full of Lords and noble men, and if they should behold you, they
would all ashy and forsake their meat: but inasmuch as you have
desired it of me so obediently for the love of God, I shall go and
do your errand, whatsoever happeth thereof: and so he went for-
ward and did his message unto the emperor. When the emperor
heard the porter name Alexander the king of Egypt, he said to the
porter: Go thy wayes, and bring him before me, how horrible and
loathsome that his visage be, and wash him a place before me,
that he may eat and feed in my presence. The porter brought him in
secretly, and ordained him a place. Let him to meat before the
emperor: and when he had well refreshed himself, he said unto one
of the emperors servants, My dear friend, do me this sacred and
valuable emperor say unto him, that I pray him for the love of God, and
for king Alexander, that he will lend me his cup of wine: the servant
said, for the love of God I will do it, but I will be with you
if you should but touch my Lords cup, he will not be any more
of the Lords cup again: nevertheless he did the request.
And when the emperor heard him to name king Alexander, he
commanded

commanded that his ship should be filled up with the best wine, and take it to him: the which wine when he had received, he put into a bottle, and took a ring that Alexander had given him with him: and put it into the cup, and sent it again where the emperor.

And when the emperor saw the ring, he instantly knew that it was the same ring he had given unto Alexander, in friendship when he departed from him: and thought in his heart that King Alexander had been dead, or else this man is very strangely come to the court, and commanded presently that he should not depart thence until the time that he had spoken with him: for in no wise could he have any knowledge of him, nor yet receive him for Alexander.

After that dinner was done & ended, the emperor took which he apart & asked him how he came by that ring: King Alexander commanded that he knew well the ring: the emperor said, I know it right well, Alexander said, what ye say to whom you gave it: the emperor said, I was right well told: and he said Alexander that you know not me, for I am Alexander: unto whom he gave the same ring: when the emperor heard that he fell to the ground for sorrow, & tore his robes and loaths, and with many great sighs, and bewailing, said, O Alexander, you are the one half of my heart: where is your glory & delicate body now in prison and prison infected, that was so fair and pleasant to behold: we answered this is happened unto me, for the great fidelity that you have done unto me in the day with my wife, when you said a word too soon to trust you and her: wherefore she became mine hand and bare me the son and a knight that in former time he had loved: hath comfort me as you may see, now they have visited me out of my prison.

And when the emperor heard that, he rose up and took him about the neck, and kissed him, and said: O my most dear and sincere beloved brother, I sorrow to see you in this great necessity and misery: I would in deed I might die for you. But my mind will stand fast: But my dear friend, take patiently a little time, that we have put for all the physicians and wise doctors in prison to be either counsel and advice, if there be any remedy to be had, or hope of recovery of your health: and if be hopeless to be won, we will neither spare labour, empire, nor any other good temporal, to make you whole and sound.

As the mean time he was brought into a state chamber richly hangen, and appointed of all manner of things that were both good and necessary for his ease and health. And in all haste sent his messengers through all parts of the world, for the most expert, and best physicians that might be found: or which within in a month after were come and presented before the emperor's chamber, that were right expert and very skillful in that science: whom the emperor said, ye well learned doctors, I have a man that is very grievously infected with a foul disease, whom I would very gladly were healed, and make as sound as he was at first: he was, having neither for gold nor silver, or any other good whatsoever that I have in the whole world, but that I would gladly give to recover his health again.

Then answered the Doctor, all that ever is possible to be done in this sick, you will soon understand, with that he gave him counsel person. And when he had said, they went to the court of the emperor: and they said, It was incurable for all physicians living.

And when the Emperour heard that, he was right sorry in his heart, and committed it to the helping hand of almighty God, calling unto him: first of the religious men that dwell near unto the Court, & a number of good people, besides many other devout persons, desired of them earnestly to make their prayers unto Almighty God, that he would vouchsafe of his infinite goodnes & mercy, to make whole his dear friend King Alexander, and the sooner for their good deeds and prayers. And he himself, with many others, fasted and prayed continually to Almighty God, for the speedy recovery and healing of his friend.

Now upon a time as King Alexander was at his prayers, there came unto him a voice from heaven saying, Tell Lodowick the emperor, that if he with his own hands will take those two little children which his wife's had at one birth, and slay them, and that with the blood of them he will wash and bath his body, then his flesh shall become as fair and as clean as the bodies of those little children: if not, thou must never look to be cured whilst breath is in thy body, and so farewell.

When King Alexander had heard this most strange voice, he then began to think within himself, what voice it was, and from whence it came: then he replied to himself, and said, This vision is not to be believed, for it is much contrary to humane nature, that any man should slay his own sons, for the recovery of the health of a strange man.

The Emperour continued both night and day in prayer with great devotion, till earnestly praying to God for remedy for King Alexander, never ceasing, until such time that a voice came unto him, and said, How long wilt thou thus call and cry unto me? when it was sent, it came unto King Alexander, by what means he might recover his health, and his body to become clean, without either spot or blemish.

When the Emperour having heard that voice, he arose and went unto King Alexander and said unto him: Of all friends the best and most true, blessed be the most high and everlasting God, the which never faileth them, put their whole trust in him: of whom I have knowledge, that it is shewed unto you, how and in what manner you may be recovered of your leprosie: wherefore I intreat & desire you, that you will plainly say open unto me how this may be done for the recovery of your former health, that we may have it together: and if you shall need any thing that may do you any good, I shall fulfil it unto my power: yea, and for your health, give all that I have. King Alexander said, Sir, I dare not show it to you how that I may be cured and healed of my leprosie, for it erreth: and it is a thing against nature for to be done, therefore I will not as yet show it you: albeit I have great trust and confidence in you.

The Emperour said, Alexander, put your trust in me still for what is possible for to be done for recovering, and restoring of your health, I shall do it: and therefore conceal nothing from me, I pray.

Then said Alexander, I have of God knowledge, that if you will take your two sons with your own hands, and wash me in their blood, I shall be whole, and therefore I have not shewed it unto you: for me it is against nature & the father should slay his own child, for the health of a stranger. The Emperour said, Say not that you

are a stranger, for I love you as my self: and therefore if I had ten children, I should not spare one for your health.

Afterwards the emperor spent his time when the empress was out of the way he went into the chamber where the children slept, and there drew out his knife and cut both their throats, and gathered the blood into a vessel, and then he bathed and washed Alexander therewith. And when he was bathed, his body and flesh was as fair and clean as though it had been a young child. Then the emperor had perfect knowledge of his visage, and kissed him, saying, O good Alexander, now I see you in the same form which I have oftentimes delighted in.

Blessed be the Almighty God, that ever I had these children, to whom your health, is restored, and your body made pure and clean. And as yet there was none that had knowledge of the death of those children, save only the emperor and Alexander.

And when the emperor saw that the good King Alexander was perfectly healed, he said unto him, I will obtain unto you an honorable company, and you shall go from hence about ten miles, and the next day send me a messenger, and let me know the day of your coming back again, and I shall then with great solemnity come and meet you, and you shall remain with me until such time as I may conveniently provide for the recovery of our Realm again.

This counsel pleased King Alexander right well, and according to that to the emperors will it was performed: for on the next day following, there came a messenger unto the emperor, certifying him of the coming back again of King Alexander.

And when the empress heard these tidings, she rejoiced, and said to the emperor: O my best beloved Lord and emperor, have you not then a just cause to rejoice and be glad, seeing that Alexander the King of Egypt, is now coming to see you, whom of long time you have most dearly seen? And if it please you to go and meet him, with your Lords, men, and Gentlemen, I shall follow you with my Ladies and Gentlemen. And as yet she knew not of the death of her two children.

Then rode the Emperor and empress with a great company of their Lords and Ladies to meet with good King Alexander: and when they met together, with great reverence and honor they received him, and with great joy and gladness they brought him into the Palace. And when the time of dinner was near at hand, Alexander was placed at the Table between the emperor and the empress, and after the mirth and cheer that he could make, he showed him.

And when the emperor perceived that, he was right joyful and glad: and he was so exceeding well pleased, that he said: O mine own Florentine, it gladdens me above all things that you were brought to King Alexander so good cheer.

Then answered the empress, and said: Wherefore should I not be glad? Is not his company unto us more precious then gold or silver? He has brought unto you, my renowned Lord, much more, for by his means it was that you attained unto so great honor and dignity: and by him many times you have been saved from death. The emperor answered, and said: Then I give you my only beloved Florentine, that you will be heed to my words that I shall say unto you: And you must that you and your lady, which yesterday sat before our table, and stayed me for the love of God, and good King Alexander, that I should give

had taken drink & She said, My honorable Lord, I saw him well, and a
 more horrible man I did never behold. Then said the emperor, I de-
 mand this one question of you, Was such that he were king Alexander
 , and that he could not by any means be made whole, but with the
 blood of our two sons, both which you in one day brought into the
 world, you would not that their blood should be shed, that he might
 cleanse himself therein, to the intent that thereby he might have pre-
 serv'd his health, and comely shape, as now you see him have?
 She answered and said unto him, My renowned Lord and hus-
 band, wherefore demand ye of me that question: I see and tell you
 a truth, that if I had ten Sons, I should gladly slay them with
 mine own hands for to prepare and obtain for him a bath and would
 cleanse him therein my own self, rather then I should leave him in
 such a loathsome and miserable case, so horrible for to behold, and
 such danger of death withal. God might well send us more child-
 ren, but such a friend were a thing impossible for us ever hereafter
 more find throughout the whole world.

When the Emperor heard this from her, he was well pleased in
 his mind, and said: O my loving Empress, had you rather have
 me our children dead. Then Alexander shoud languish in his leprosie?
 When hol I open and shew you now the ruth of the matter: That
 soul which you say, was Alexander that lieth here by us, and
 dying that means is made whole with the blood of our two sons, and
 now they are dead.

As soon as the Empress did hear that, she began with extremity
 of sorrow, mournfully to cry out, as nature would she should do al-
 though she had said before, that she had rather see her children dead,
 then Alexander should remain in such pain and misery.

The nourishers of the children understanding this, they presently
 with great crying and weeping ran to the nursery and chamber of
 them: and great sorrow and bewailing was made through the empe-
 rors Court for his two sons: and when the nourishers of them came
 to the chamber, they found the children a playing, and singing a song
 of praise and thanksgiving, to the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, for
 restoring again of their lives: and then they returned again in all
 haste unto the emperor and empress, and shewed unto them how
 that the children were living, and that about their throats where
 they were cut, they had circles of cheere of gold: whereof was great
 joy and gladness in all the Court, with thanksgiving to Almighty
 God, for that exceeding great miracle and wonderful work.

After that the Emperor with a great multitude and number of
 people gathered and assembled together, went with king Alexander
 into Egypt, and set him again in his Royalty and possession of his
 Realm. And the Queen with the knight, who had lived long to-
 gether in adultery, he caused them both to be burnt. And when
 this was done the emperor had one only sister, whom he married to
 young Alexander.

And when king Alexander had obtained all his Realm again, and
 was set in good rest and peace, the emperor returned again unto his
 empire: and then king Alexander righ wisely & politickly govern-
 ed himself in his affairs, that he overcame his rebellious enemies.

And when he was seated in his glory, peace, and might, he had
 thought and mind upon his father and mother by whom he was call-
 ed into

into the Sea, who dwelt in far parts. And from thence he sent unto them a messenger, to let them have knowledge how that the King of Egypt upon such a day would be with them, to view those parts of the most Countrey, and to sport himself, and to make a royal feast with them. And when the messenger was thither come, they received him joyfully, with bountiful entertainment, and large gifts were given and sent him back again, saying, That their services shall be ready at all time to do the kings pleasure, but that could never be discerned by power, that he should vouchsafe to show them honor whereof they were not worthy, as for to come to visit them to those parts, and to sport himself there a while.

The messenger returned back towards the kings Court, and there showed the king how willingly they would receive him, and in what manner they did reward him, and how true and faithful they were, and ready to do him service at his commandment, wherewith the king was well pleased. And when the day was come that was set for the king with a fair company rode towards his fathers house, the which was to the knight his father, and mother, unknown that it was their Son.

When the king was come near to his fathers Castle, the knight rode joyfully to meet and receive him: and when he came nigh to the king, he alighted from his horse, and did his reverence upon his knees, but the king took him up presently, and commanded him to take horse again, and so they rode together unto the Castle.

And when that they were come thither, the mother came unto him and fell upon our knees, and welcomed him gladly, and the King took her up as lovingly. And kissed her right friendly: and he said unto him, O most honorable Lord, you do this (unworthy) great honor with the presence of your most honorable personage, the which we shall never be able to deserve.

After that the meat was all ready, and that time of day was come to go to dinner, the father came with a balon and ewer, and the mother with a towel, saying, Sir, all things are ready, please it you to wash: And when the king saw that he smiled, and said to himself, Now is the song of the Nightingale true, that my father and mother should gladly fulfil, as I have said, if that myself should thereunto consent, and suffer them to do it. But he would not suffer them to do him any such service, saying, Your age is to be honored and worshipped, and therefore I will have none of it: and then he called one of his servants unto him, when he commanded to do the service. Then said the knight, You will not suffer us to do it for our honor, because we are not worthy thereof. The King said, Have I not said, that for your age I forbear you? When the king was set at the table, he set his mother on the right hand of him, and his father on the left side, and they, as much as they might, did his honor, and hold his favor and countenance.

After dinner, the King presently entered into a fair chamber, and made the knight with his Lady, to follow him in, and commanded all others to avoid their presence.

And when they were all alone, the King said, Have you no children? They answered, we have neither Son nor daughter. And the king said, Had you never any? The knight answered, We had had one son; but he is long ago dead. Then the king asked of what

Dead

death he died? And the knight said, A natural death. Then the king said, If I may otherwise know of And them you are found with of the most horrible fault. Then asked the knight, My most honorable and renowned Lord, wherefore enquire you earnestly after our son? The king answered and said, That do I not without just cause. and therefore I must & will know of what death he died: if you will not tell me, I shall cause you both to die a most shameful death.

When they heard that, they fell upon the ground on their knees before him, and asked him pardon and forgiveness for their lives. But the King would not suffer them to kneel, but took them up, and said, To that intent came I not unto your house, to eat your bread, and to betray you: but say to me the very truth, and you shall be pardoned: for it is given me to understand, that you have put him to death, and if that ye be found culpable therein, and come to judgment, you must die a most shameful death.

Then said the knight, My most honorable Lord, pardon me my life, and I shall tell you the very truth. The king said, Fear not for I shall do you no harm.

Then answered the knight and said, My most dread Sovereign Lord, we had a Son that was wise, and learned, and right well understood, and upon a time as he stood before us, and served us at the Table, there came unto the window a Nightingale that sung exceedingly sweetly, whose song he began to interpret, and to tell us what it meant, and said This bird singeth that I shall become so great and mighty a Lord, that it shall be to your honor and advancement. In such wise that you my Father shall be glad to hold a basin with water to wash my hands, and my mother a towel, if that I would suffer it.

And when I did hear that, I was sore moved and vexed in my mind, and so I took him upon my shoulder, and cast him into the sea for to drown him.

Then said the king, What evil might have come to you, if he had been made so great and mighty? He thinketh it should have been to you for your honor, comfort and profit. The knight said, My renowned Lord, it was no reason, but a woodness.

The king answered, That was a great foolishness of you, that you should would do against the ordinance and will of God. And now you shall know for truth I am your Son that ye did cast into the Sea. And God of his great mercy and goodness hath saved me, and by his grace hath brought and preserved me to this estate and dignity.

And the father and mother hearing that, with fear & joy replenished and amazed, did fall flat to the ground, whom he lovingly and reverently took up, saying, Fear not, but rather rejoice & be glad, for let you shall suffer no harm, but my exaltation shall be to your glory, joy and profit: and so he kiss both Father and Mother, with great joy and gladness. Then began the mother to weep and lament greatly, and the king said unto her, Leave off your sorrowing and weeping, and be of good cheer, for in my Realm you shall be honored above me, during my life: and so he took them both with him, into his kingdom, where they dwelt a long time together in honor, and joy, and ended their days with comfort and love of all the people.

Here followeth the application of the Example to the purpose.

Then said Dioclesian the Emperors Son, Lord, have you understood what I have said. The Emperoz said, Right well. Then said the son, My most honorable and renowned father, although that God hath given and indued me with wisdom and understanding above others, that shal not be impairing of your honor and might, but moze for the preservation and maintenance of the same: so in like manner the kings excellent Majesty, which was nothing to the hindrance of the father, but this rather, for his worship, profit, and greater comfort. For as long as they lived, it was in very great joy and mirth, that they were loved of the people, and honored of his kingdom. Then said the Emperoz, My beloved son, I will wholly resign all the Empire unto you to govern and rule, for I perceive well by your narration that you have so me declared, that it is best for me, and most for mine ease, that I now leave this worldly and tedious business, and the labor and care of a king, and betake me to my rest and ease for I am old and feeble. Then answered the son, and said unto his Father, My most honorable Lord and Father, so shal it be: but as long as ye live, you shal have the authority and government of the Empire, to do your command, as it appertained unto an Emperoz: but in all the businesses that are laborious and trouble some, I will alwayes be ready to minister any service that possibly I can according to my bounden duty.

How Judgement was given upon the Empress and how she and her Lovers were put to death.

Then the Emperoz commanded the Judges and Justices to sit in judgement, and to bring again the Empress before them with the Ladies, and also the ribaud her best beloved, cloathed in the vesture and habit of a woman, whom he did cause to stand next unto the Empress: Then the Emperors Son asked sentence and just judgement upon them saving,

My most honorable Lord and Father, then as you are emperoz of all the world, and that your Majesty and power requireth to do true justice unto all your Subjects that desire it, so now I demand, that you this day do give right sentence, and true judgement upon the untruth, falsehood and shame, which were put and alleged unto me by the Empress. For the which accusations, I have been seven times led unto the gallows, and have stood in great jeopardy and peril of my life: and also that she hath been to your untrue of her body, as you have seen by good proof made before you, and on the which I ask judgement, and therefore command your Judges and Justices to give sentence thereupon, according to right, equity, and Law.

As soon as the Empress heard this, she fell flat to the earth before the emperoz, and asked mercy & forgiveness for her just offence and misdoing: but it helped nor profit her nothing, for the Son would have right, and desired judgement. Then spake the Judges and Justices, Her own misdeeds condemn her, and the report of her Laman by her kept and found therefore we give sentence against

The seven Wise Master.

71

gainst the emperors, that he shal be bound to a horses tail, and drawn through all the streets of the City to the place of execution, and there to be burnt. The judge and give sentence against the emperors, that he shal be quartered and smitten in pieces and his flesh cast to the Hounds and Birds of the Air, for to devour him. And this sentence was approbated and allowed of all People.

Hereafter in short time died the emperors, and Dioclesian his Son governed and ruled the empire with great wisdom, and alwayes with him and kept his Masters with him in great Honor and glory. By whose counsel and wisdom he governed the empire, and he excelled all his Predecessors in riches, & doing right and justice: and his Masters so loved him above all others in the world, that many times they put themselves in great peril and jeopardy of their lives for him, and so ended their dayes in joy and honor to the praise of Almighty God.



T H E E N D.

